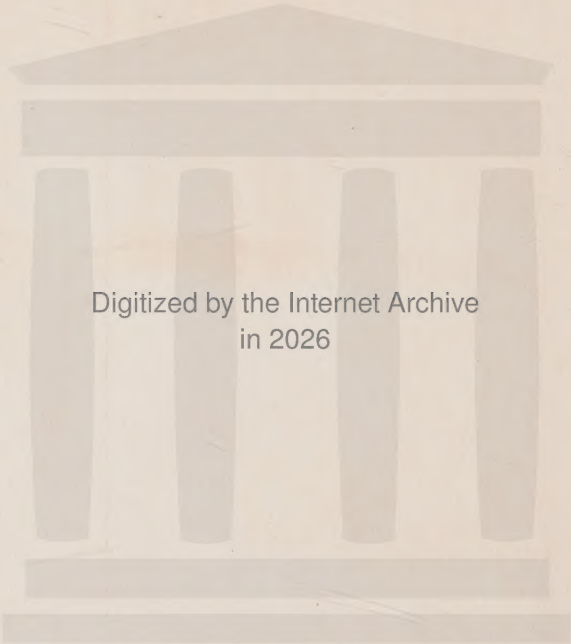

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THE PRINCIPLES

OF CHRISTIANS CALLED

"OPEN BRETHREN"

BY

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PREFACE.

IT is with mingled feelings that I take up the pen to write this Preface, for the service was one which beloved Mr. Bergin of Ashley Down, shortly before he was called home to rest from his labours, had promised to render. The loss sustained by his removal is, therefore, brought forcibly to mind, while added to this is the feeling of increased responsibility in seeking to fulfil that which it would have been his pleasure to do. With pleasure, too, but a pleasure thus chastened do I now undertake it.

It is well to make clear to the reader that albeit no little satisfaction is afforded by the anticipation of the profit which is to be derived from the careful perusal of the following pages, and the help they will afford, especially to younger Christians, yet, on the other hand, the writing of these prefatory remarks does not imply that the writer endorses all that the Author of the book has expressed. Whatever divergence of opinion there may be is, however, not sufficient to hinder the happy fellowship of assisting to speed it on its errand.

The appellation "Open Brethren" or, indeed, even of "Brethren" as a denominational title is, on very proper grounds, objected to by large numbers of the Christians who are known by the term. Yet it serves a purpose conveniently in connection with the present book, and especially as it is the term employed in general parlance concerning

those to whom reference is made by the name. It should, however, be remembered that the appellation was not adopted by them. Anything savouring of denominationalism was, in the first instance, as it is to be hoped is the case to-day, repugnant to those whose history more especially forms the subject of one of the following chapters. That is to say, while recognising the significance of the saying of the Lord, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," they viewed this last word as applying equally to all God's children, and consequently repudiated the use of it as a sectarian title commencing with a capital letter, and particularly with the addition of the name of a certain township. Their desire was to own no title save the Name of Him whose Name is named upon His people. Led of God to examine all things by the light of His Word, their aim was to discard the traditions of men, and to do as is recorded of the earliest Christians, who "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2. 42).

Not a little significance attaches to the circumstances whereby in other places, in addition to those mentioned in chapter vi., and yet during the same period therein indicated, a few of the Lord's people, without the knowledge of what had been similarly going on elsewhere, became exercised in heart concerning the fact that in many respects the modes of worship and religious practice to which they were accustomed were at variance with what is set forth in the Scriptures. The result was that, in these cases also, the determination "to obey God rather than men" was carried into effect.

Taking all this into consideration, there is no cause for wonder that what was so obviously a work of the Holy Spirit immediately aroused the bitter antagonism of the Adversary. That reference to the disintegrating effects of this antagonism is beyond the scope of these remarks, will be sufficiently clear from the very title of the book, and especially to readers who have observed the course of those known as "Open Brethren." The degree of unity and harmony which has prevailed among them is due in no inconsiderable measure to the missionary spirit which has characterised them. Indeed, speaking of individual assemblies, it may be said that their spiritual prosperity has been in direct proportion to their missionary zeal.

That the present publication, however, should be in any way regarded as a eulogy of these Christians would be entirely inconsistent with the Author's design. The subjects, whether doctrinal or historical, are set forth by him in a way which is calculated to give definiteness of idea as well as spiritual profit to those on whose behalf the book has been written.

May our God and Father, whose glory has been his motive in undertaking the work, be pleased to use its message for the edification of the reader, and so for the honour of His Name whose promise ever applies to all matters of doctrine, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God."

W. E. VINE.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE rapid exhaustion, within three or four months, of the first edition of this book demonstrates that it meets, however unworthily, a felt need. The writer is very deeply grateful to the many kind friends who have helped to introduce it all over the country. We are enabled in the present issue to improve a few sentences unhappily phrased, and to add a chapter giving a brief account by Mr. E. Hamer Broadbent of some faithful servants of God on the continent of Europe who maintained a true apostolic succession, even amidst all the darkness of the Middle Ages.

As many have inquired for a copy of the Schedule printed in connection with "The Western Counties and South Wales Evangelization Trust," mentioned on page 80, we have added as Chapter XI. the portion relating to Doctrines and Practices.

A. R. S.

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ANTHONY NORRIS GROVES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE principles set forth in this book have been to thousands of saintly souls a mainspring in the busy round of life, and a pillow whereon to rest the weary head in death. They have made missionaries, philanthropists, and those best of God's ministers on earth, holy, devoted fathers and mothers. They have made men to whom the whole world is under obligations, like A. N. Groves, S. P. Tregelles, George Müller and Hudson Taylor. They are deep-based, rock-ribbed in the fact of Jesus Christ, and the revealed Word of God.

Now, many of these saints have fallen asleep, and they hand down to us who follow them their testimony, like the Flaming Cross in Scottish history, bidding us carry it on to the younger generation rising about us.

When we see our own personal friends leaving these principles, regarding it as a matter of indifference what church they attend, or even getting into spiritual difficulties and abandoning the essentials of faith, we wonder, sadly, whether there was a stage at which they might have been saved by clearer teaching. Thank God in a number of our meetings there are men of grace and gift who supply this need, but we feel that there should be some further help independent of time and place, which can only be rendered by the printed page.

Experienced brethren in our midst will perhaps judge that it would have been better if the task of providing for this had been undertaken by someone older, better known,

and more deeply instructed in the Scriptures than the present writer. He himself wishes most sincerely that this had been the case, as there was a time when such a book might have been of the utmost value to himself, but he is not aware that there is in common circulation any simple, cheap, interesting manual, such as might appeal to young folks, setting forth the principles which made our fathers so strong. Moreover, it is true that in some respects every new generation has to fight its own battles and face its own problems. There is very much that we can only learn from brethren of age and experience, but sometimes we are helped in a special way by one who has been, still is, fighting just our battles and facing just our problems. Fourteen years spent as student and teacher in daily contact with young men and women in college and university life, as well as in Christian work and worship, must at least bring one into grips with the difficulties of the day, both moral and intellectual. It is a longing to help those who stagger under the intolerable pressure of these difficulties that has prompted this book, which is only intended for persons, like the writer, with no special theological education. It may perchance help such to appreciate the fuller teaching of those whom God has raised up amongst us and qualified " for the perfecting of the saints."

One must recognise, of course, that men and women do not often in real life found their faith on anything that can be written down in cold print such as this. We all need to learn to walk with God individually by proving Him for ourselves in life's crises when all other help is unthinkable—by stretching out eager hands, betwixt faith and despair, as the hands of a drowning man struggling in the darkness, and feeling with tremulous joy His answering grip. Of necessity, this experience may not come to us in our teens (although some pass through it quite unknown to their nearest and dearest), and unhappily many make shipwreck of their faith before the opportunity arrives to test it.

As soon as the little boat leaves the sheltered, landlocked haven of childhood, slips across the bar, and begins

to shape its own course out on the wide ocean of life, the hurricane sweeps down upon it—the craving for pleasure, fear of poverty or of isolation, personal sorrow, the difficulty of reconciling modern teaching with the old beliefs. But much has been accomplished if one is given grace of the Lord to write or say something that shall help to conserve faith for a few years until it has been made strong by the realization of the presence of the Pilot on board the little craft in some terrifying storm.

Is it too much to ask the reader not to hurry through these chapters, but to weigh them in the scales of an open Bible? However inadequate the treatment, the principles demand deep attention and personal application.

It may be that someone will think that an occasional sentence is harsh and narrow. If so, he may find in the concluding section that this is not meant to cut off fellowship with any true child of God. It takes very uncommon grace to write convincingly where one feels strongly, without seeming to lack in charity towards those who differ.

Almost all the quotations are from the Revised Version.

A. R. SHORT.

CHAPTER I.

The Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Canst thou by searching find out God?"—*Zophar the Naamathite.*

It is probable that most readers of this chapter will already be convinced of the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. Unfortunately, we believe languidly. Nothing but a conviction going right down to the mainspring of our natures will be powerful enough to take control of the complicated machinery of our thought and practice, and to set it all in motion.

Amid the clash of controversy as to what, after all, our Christianity really involves, it is very easy to miss the essential point. Some will say that a particular sort of "conversion" is the essence; others, the observance of certain forms of worship; others, a correct moral conduct. The agnostic, standing aside and watching disdainfully the smoke of the battle, takes on his lips the question written above, and promptly answers, "No." We need to go back to the beginning and to seek to discover where the Founder of the faith laid His foundation. Here we find ourselves confronted with a situation which is unique. All the world's great religious teachers, Moses, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Paul; Augustine, Martin Luther, John Wesley; even Confucius and Buddha, have regarded themselves as entrusted with a great truth which they must efface their own personality to display. On the other hand, the Lord Jesus Christ most impressively identified himself with the truth He taught, and made men's relationships to Himself the supreme test. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14. 6); "I am the Resurrection" (John 11. 25); "I am the Door" (John 10. 9); "I am the Light of the World" (John 8. 12); "Come unto Me and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28).

When He had elicited from Peter the answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16. 16), He solemnly commented, "On this Rock will I build My Church" (Matt. 16. 18). It is clear then, that the very foundation of faith must be a right appreciation of Christ. The agnostic who says, "You cannot by searching find out God" has not commenced the search until he has made a study of the historical fact of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

We shall seek to fix our attention on a few main lines of argument only. The student is invited to work out the subject for himself, using, if he will, the references at the end of the chapter.

The following are some of the evidences of the Deity of our Lord :—

1. His own claims.
2. The witness of the Prophets.
3. The witness of the Apostles and their contemporaries
4. The witness of His unique Life.
5. The witness of His Resurrection.
6. The witness of history.

1. OUR LORD'S CLAIMS TO DEITY.

Let us begin by allowing that we shall search our Lord's utterances in vain for any simple, direct statement of His Deity, such as we may find in the writings of His followers, although His indirect claims are perfectly conclusive. Immense capital has been made by Unitarians and those whose faith is Unitarian while their profession is Christian, of the absence of any such direct statement. But to fall into their mistake is to betray a total lack of the historical sense. It is true that our Lord spoke for all time, but obviously His form of speech was in particular reference to the problems of His own generation.

Every generation has its own theological problems, and the controversial works of a past age are therefore of little interest to us as a rule, because their battle-ground is not ours. Who knows or cares to-day about the pros and

*Carnegie Simpson, *The Fact of Christ.*

cons of the great Arian controversy, Homoousion or Homoiousion, which in the days of Constantine tore the Church into fragments, and led to numberless banishments, martyrdoms, and wars, to say nothing of whole libraries of bitter disputing on papyrus or vellum? Even in the short period of history covered by the New Testament, the strategic point in the Church's warfare shifted with time more than once. When Paul wrote his earlier epistles, the battle turned about the keeping of the Mosaic Law by Gentile Christians. When John wrote his epistles, probably thirty or forty years after the completion of the letter to the Galatians, he had to insist on the proper humanity of our Lord, and on the genuine facts of His death, because a school of heresy had arisen denying that the Messiah could die.

Now the problem during those three brief years,

> ". . . . The sinless years,
> Which breathed beneath the Syrian blue,"

was whether Jesus of Nazareth was the long-expected Messiah. That was essentially a Jewish question. The problem of our day is whether He was, and is, God. And really, the problems are identical. It would have been meaningless, in an audience of Pharisees and Scribes, for our Lord to have insisted on His Deity as well as on His Messiahship, because they recognised fully the Deity of their expected Messiah. To them, as we have said, the problems were identical. A Jewish writing, the book of Enoch, composed a little before this very time, has come down to us, and demonstrates clearly that in the eyes of a Jew to claim Messiahship was to claim Deity. In this book the Messiah is described both as Son of Man, and Son of God. Isaiah had foretold long before the coming of the Christ in these words; "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The Mighty God*" (Is. 9. 6). The Jews realized perfectly that our Lord's claims amounted to a declaration of His Deity, and took up stones to stone Him, exclaiming indignantly, "Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God" (John 10. 33).

With this introduction, let us see what He did claim, and whether His indirect statements do not amount to complete proof that He set Himself forth as part of the Godhead.

He states definitely that He was the Messiah. "I know," said the woman at Samaria, "that Messiah cometh; when he is come, he will tell us all things." Jesus said, "I, that speak unto thee, am He." As we have seen, this was equivalent to a statement of His Deity.

It is quite clear, also, that Christ claimed divine attributes.

He claimed *oneness* with God the Father. We cannot imagine a mere man, even such a one as Paul, saying, "I and the Father are one." The Jews, naturally, were horrified, and snatched up stones at once (John 10. 30).

He claimed *equal honour* with God the Father, and accepted it when offered. "That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father" (John 5. 23). When Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God," He did not refuse the worship, as the apostles always did, but said, "Because thou hast *seen* Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed" (John 20. 28, 29). What would the holiest saint and teacher now on earth say, if someone were to address him as, "My Lord and my God?"

He claimed *eternal being*. "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8. 58). In the future He looked to descend on the clouds of Heaven, and to judge the world. (Matt. 26. 63, 64; 25. 34).

He dared to link Himself with the Father and the Holy Ghost in baptism. (Matt. 28. 19).

We find other evidence of His exaltation and dignity in the confidence with which He set aside the old Judaic law, divinely inspired as it was, with His repeated "It was said to them of old time . . . But *I* say unto you." A special instance of this is seen in His treatment of the Sabbath. It was God's Sabbath, but Christ said that He was Lord of the Sabbath. (Matt. 12. 8).

2. THE WITNESS OF THE PROPHETS.

The plain testimony of Isaiah to the Child Born, Who was to be the Mighty God, has already been mentioned. Let us here think a little about the words of Zechariah (13. 7). After promising that a fountain shall be opened for sin and uncleanness, he goes on to call upon the sword to awake against "the Man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord." It is impossible to call any mere man God's Fellow, that is, His equal. In this amazing sentence, which must have puzzled both Zechariah himself and his hearers, we have all the mystery of God come in human form to a shameful death, which was to be the fountain of cleansing for His people.

It may be objected that many of the prophecies which are applied by Christians to Christ had a primary application to the events of Jewish history. This is self evident, but it by no means disproves the secondary application. It is certain that Isaiah and Zechariah, and others also, foresaw the coming of a Messiah as well as their national destiny. The objection only shows, what we are quite ready to admit, that God so directed the history of the Jews and their ancestors as to make them a typical picture of Christ and of the Christian Church.

3. THE WITNESS OF THE APOSTLES AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES.

It will suffice here to choose one or two testimonies from each writer or speaker. John the Baptist bore witness. He described his mission by saying that he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" (John 1. 23). If we compare this with the passage in Isaiah from which it is quoted, it is quite plain that John was preparing the way for God. In the East, the usual occasion for road construction is when some great potentate is to pass that way. Then, every valley is embanked, to make a level track; the rough places are smoothed, and the hills are cut through. This is the picture in Isaiah 40, and it was to be "a highway for our

God." In effect, John said to the cities of Judah, "Behold, your God!" (Is. 40. 9). He looked on Jesus, and said, "This is the Son of God" (John 1. 34).

Paul bore witness. Passing over the famous verse, "God was manifested in the flesh" (which is undoubtedly an error of some copyist who mistook ΟΣ, "who," for ΘΣ, "God"), we read in Acts 20. 28 concerning "the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood." Again, Paul writes of "Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery or a prize to be *equal with God*" (Phil. 2. 6).

The Apostle Peter bore witness. "The righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ" is undoubtedly the correct translation in 2 Peter 1. 1 (R.V.).

The unknown writer to the Hebrews bore witness. "Of the Son He saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever'" (Hebrews 1. 8).

The Apostle John bore repeated and perfectly plain witness, because when he came to write his gospel and epistles, the Jewish nation was broken and scattered, Jerusalem and its temple were in ruins, and now the objectors to the Christian religion were Gentiles and heretics, many of whom were not so much interested in the Jewish Messiah, but could not understand that God had been manifested in the flesh. He opens his gospel with the solemn statement, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God.*" The Jewish writers and philosophers of the age, such as Philo of Alexandria, and the writers of the Targums or commentaries on the old testament, frequently wrote of "The Word." The phrase was a current conception of the time; the scribes regarded the Word as a mediating power by which God made Himself known to men. They described Moses as bringing out the Israelites to Sinai to meet the Word of God. They did not connect The Word in any way with the Messiah. John, in a single chapter, which must have amazed its first readers, shows that The Word and the Messiah were one and the same, possessed of the full Deity, and that they were incarnate on earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One more tremendous passage will suffice. John wrote, "These things said Isaiah, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him" (John 12. 41). What things? The preceding verse gives a quotation from Isaiah 6. The One Whose glory Isaiah saw is plainly, from the context, Jesus Christ. Turning to the Old Testament chapter, what do we find? One of its most majestic passages, describing the Lord, high and lifted up, with His train filling the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim; one cried to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." This, John tells us, is the glory of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

We have seen, thus far, how our Lord claimed Deity, how it was foretold by the prophets, and witnessed to by the apostles. For the Christian, that is amply sufficient. For the agnostic, more must be said, because miserable impostors such as Joseph Smith the Mormon, Dr. Dowie, and Smith-Pigott of Clapton, have claimed divine attributes, and foolish men have believed them. In the witnesses to be considered, we have evidence that gives our Lord a place perfectly unique in the world's history.

4. THE WITNESS OF OUR LORD'S UNIQUE LIFE.

Many men have been great in a few of the attributes that make up life. There have been great teachers, but no one amongst the teachers, not Socrates, not Confucius, not Augustine, rises to such a tower of perfection that we cannot find a fair criticism for so much as a single sentence in his teaching. There have been great saints, but none, not Paul, not Francis of Assisi, not William Tyndale, not Robert Chapman nor George Müller reaches, or claims to have reached, sinless perfection. There have been men of miraculous gifts, but they could not raise themselves from the dead. There have been men of immense discernment and insight, able to read the very thoughts and purposes of their fellows, but they have all been deceived occasionally. If Jesus Christ had been infallible in only a single one of these four attributes, He would have stood alone in the world's history. When we see Him triumphing

in them all and in a thousand more, we must feel that it is impudence to put Him merely on the same platform with earth's best or greatest. His life was supernatural. We do not need to hear that infidels have admitted as much; if we have honest eyes and honest minds, we can read it for ourselves. It is no use, as even John Stuart Mill pointed out, to pretend that the four evangelists invented so majestic a character. That would involve not one miracle, but four.

We may spend a few minutes illustrating these elements in His Life. Shall we try to imagine the effect on our current conceptions of God, of the Hereafter, of our duty to the poor and to our neighbour, and of our standards of right and wrong, if we could eliminate the teaching of our Lord from our own education and from that of our educators? We easily fail to understand how much of the morality and moral teaching even of atheists is owing to their Christian ancestry and the Christian atmosphere of the land of their birth. All the words of Christ that have come down to us, printed in continuity and without repetition, would not fill a single issue of the "Times," and yet over these the wise men of nineteen centuries have pored without exhausting their significance; they have a message equally suitable for every generation.

As has often been pointed out, the nature of the miracles is as remarkable as the fact of the miracles. They were never mere marvels. They were never hurtful to His enemies, although one solemn lesson was taught the disciples with a fig-tree as illustration. Our Lord would never use miraculous power to get Himself out of difficulty. He would not make stones into bread, nor would He come down from the Cross, lest some tempted child of His should one day say, "My Lord resisted temptation, because He could use miraculous power to feed Himself. I cannot make bread out of stones, so I must yield to the Devil." The fabled miracles of ancient gods or mediæval saints always included mere marvels, or works of vengeance, or deliverances from their own difficulties. Our Lord worked only to bless or teach some one by His supernatural power. What the accounts of the miracles would have been like if

they had been fabrications may be judged from the strange stories which have come down to us from the second and third centuries in the spurious gospels of Thomas, of Nicodemus, and of the Infancy, whereof a fair specimen may be read in the miracle play given in Longfellow's "Golden Legend." These miracles are always childish and sometimes vindictive.

There is a striking illustration of His deep knowledge of men and things in the way in which He dealt with the question of giving tribute to Cæsar. His enemies had hatched a clever and dangerous plot. To say "Yes" was to ruin Christ's influence with the people; to say "No" was to court a Roman prison. But His amazing wisdom detected instantly all their scheming, and indicated the only possible line of reply, which was that in effect they had already accepted the yoke of Cæsar with his coinage; He found a penny the means of making the lesson enter in by the eye-gate as well as ear-gate, and of furnishing at the same time the text for a short but tremendous sermon in eight words—"And to God the things which are God's" (Matt. 22. 21).

We steal a momentary glance as it were, with hands over our eyes, at the dazzling splendour of the Holiness of His Character. We see the vehemence with which He scorned and denounced vice, hypocrisy and formalism, how they shrivelled before His face like paper thrown on a fire; we contemplate the awful standard He set in His sermon on the mount, yet with all this is blended the depths of His self-sacrifice for a sinful world, and the amazing grace He never failed to show to true penitence, so touchingly illustrated in the stories of the woman in the Pharisee's house, and of His dealings, after His Resurrection, with Simon Peter (see Luke 22. 61, Mark 16. 7, 1 Cor. 15. 5, John 21. 4, 19). "Which of you," He exclaimed, taking up a challenge from which every earthly saint must shrink, "which of you convicteth Me of sin?" (John 8. 46). These are the words either of Deity, or of the most arrogant presumption.

His most implacable foes, as well as those who know Him best, all testify with one accord to the sinlessness of

His character. The Pharisees and Herodians, his accusers before Pilate, could not assail it. "That righteous man," says Pilate's wife. "I have betrayed innocent blood," shrieked the traitor Judas. "This man hath done nothing amiss," testifies the dying thief. John declares, "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3. 5). Peter says, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2. 22, 23).

Some of the virtues displayed in the character of the Lord Jesus are all the more noteworthy because, although they have become commonplace to us, they ran counter to the ideals of His day. His courage and sincerity and religious zeal the best men of the time could appreciate, but at least three traits of His character were foreign to all their estimations of the perfect man. Patriotism they could understand, but not a universal love flowing over to all sorts and conditions of men. There is a certain sex-affinity, family affection, and even social or tribal fellowship which men share with the brute beasts, but love for those not of our own race or family, even for actual or potential enemies, is only learned of Jesus Christ. Thus it becomes true that "whosoever loveth is born of God." Another feature in His character which the age did not appreciate was forgiveness. The current feeling was well expressed in the inscription on the monument to Sulla at Rome: "No friend ever did me so much good, or enemy so much harm, but I repaid him with interest." Jesus forgave His very murderers.

Thirdly, He taught us the grace of humility. He chose His friends from the ignorant and lowly, and though He was their Master and Lord, He did not disdain to wash their feet when they were travel-stained, and prepare their breakfast when they had fished all night, and caught nothing.

5. THE WITNESS OF HIS RESURRECTION.

We do well to follow the example of the apostles, who wherever they went made the Resurrection the chief evidence of the Deity of their Lord. If we read the Acts or Epistles with this in mind, we shall notice that it is extraordinary how the theme is introduced again and again.

It is impossible in one short section to set out to prove the fact of the Resurrection ; it must suffice to indicate lines along which the reader can study it for himself.

Note first, it is vouched for by six writers, whose works are in our hands to-day, all contemporary with our Lord, three of them at least eye-witnesses of the facts they describe, and the other three in personal touch with many eye-witnesses. Each of the six, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul, wrote without copying from the others ; this is perfectly certain, because each gives us some new fact or incident, and though their testimony to the main trend of events is unanimous, yet for us, who have lost some of the links, it is not easy to build up a continuous story without some clashing or contradiction in detail. For evidence that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear, we must refer the reader to a later page. No serious critic has ever denied that Paul wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians, and its wonderful fifteenth chapter, dealing with the Resurrection, passes without dispute as an account penned within thirty years of the event itself.

The very characters of the narratives are a powerful testimony to their truth. Their artlessness and simplicity, their touches of nature, have won them a host of converts. Let the reader just sit down, free his mind from prejudice, and read them to see if they do not ring true. Could a late fabricator have resisted the temptation to make Christ appear before Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod, to confound them with His judgments? Yet we are not told that He appeared to any but His own brother and His disciples.

Those who will not admit that these six writers were describing fact instead of fiction, are driven to the most desperate hypotheses in order to maintain their objection. It is obvious that the evangelists and apostles did not conspire to cheat the world with a fraud. Men do not sacrifice their business, their homes, and their lives, to teach what they know to be untrue, and if they wished to deceive they would have made their story a little less incredible. If a man can believe that the writers of the Gospels and Epistles were all the time living and teaching

a conscious lie, his own heart must be steeped in deceit and wicked scheming.

It is equally absurd to suppose that Christ's death on the cross was only apparent; and that someone by skill and care nursed Him into life again. The Roman soldiers took good care that their victims were all dead. A man who had so nearly died would not have been well enough to deceive anybody in a day or two. Such a theory involves a thousand difficulties, amongst others, that He was a rank impostor.

The only theory alleged by serious critics, such as Renan and Strauss, is that the disciples suffered from visions which they mistook for realities to such an extent that timid men in a few days became bold enough to face the world, to suffer and to die for their forty days' delusions! It is suggested that Paul, when the whole current of his thoughts was running in a totally opposite direction, had a similar vision, and likewise mistook it for a fact. It is suggested that five hundred brethren at once had the same vision, and mistook it for a reality (1 Cor. 15. 6). It is suggested that James, our Lord's brother, who did not believe on Him, had the same mysterious vision, and was converted by it (1 Cor. 15. 7; compare John 7. 5, Gal. 1. 19).

It is also suggested that it did not occur to the chief priests to have the grave in the garden opened to see if the body was still there, or that if they did so, it was discovered that someone *unknown to the whole circle of Christ's followers* had broken into it while the guard slept! Finally, it is suggested of all the beautiful incidents and little details recorded of our Lord's sayings and doings after the Resurrection, all the tender grace of His dealings with Peter and with Mary Magdalene, and all His remarkable teaching about the evangelization of the world—that all these are purely imaginary, and yet that they are so cleverly compounded that they read exactly as though they were written by eye-witnesses, and have as a matter of fact satisfied clever infidel lawyers like Gilbert West of their genuineness! Really, it takes an impossible amount of credulity to be a sceptic!

Just one more simple fact must be mentioned. We know how punctiliously the Jews kept their seventh day of the week as a rest day. How came the day to be changed to the first, our Christian Sunday, which was already being kept in the first century (Acts 20. 7)? Nothing but a most stupendous event could effect such a change. Even the French Revolution, tremendous as it was, failed to change the days of the week, although it tried hard to do so. Its ten-day week lasted barely a dozen years.

If we honestly admit that Christ rose from the dead, we must also admit that when God raised Him, He endorsed His claim to deity. He declared Him to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1. 4).

6. THE WITNESS OF HISTORY.

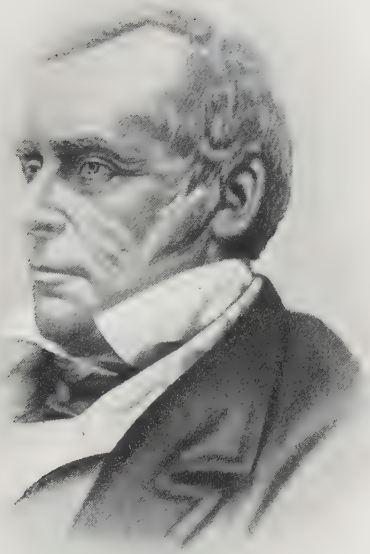
The justest judge on earth, of right and wrong, of true and false, that this world can ever appeal to, is what we call the Verdict of History. Prejudice sways kings, and those who represent them on the judicial bench, whenever they deal with the most critical problems of their own age, and in every generation martyrs of Truth have been condemned unjustly by the highest authority of the day. Russell Lowell's noble poem says truly of the martyrs:

> "While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return,
> To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn."

In the long run, the false is unmasked, and the true stands.

How has History dealt with the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ? In the first place, it is very significant that early History did not attempt to deny His miraculous works. Neither the Pharisees, nor Caiaphas, nor Herod, nor Celsus and Porphyry the philosopher critics of the early centuries, nor the Emperor Julian the Apostate, ever denied the fact of the miracles.

In the second place, how striking has been the fulfilment of our Lord's parable of the grain of mustard seed! The Gates of Hell have striven against the Church built on the Rock, but they have not been able to overthrow it. It did not look very probable that about 120 men and



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women, who were reduced to meeting in an upper room for fear of the Jews, and whose eleven leaders had lately given proof of their quality by running away, would ever make a mark in the world. Against them and their converts all the wisdom, cruelty and might of Jew and Roman turned their bitterest opposition. Nero beheaded Peter and Paul, and filled his garden with Christians flaming at the stake. Nearly every man of mark became a martyr. For three hundred years all countries ran with Christian blood. They died in such thousands under the hand of Diocletian and Galerius that medals were struck, one of which has been dug up in Spain, in memory of the annihilation of Christianity ! Through the deadly dangers of the Arian heresy, through the unspeakable degradations of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with their wicked Popes, corrupt bishops, and heathen priests, and through the bad days of the Georges in England, when religion sank into contempt even in the eyes of those who professed to preach it, God has brought His Church, and the worship of His Son. He has always had an Athanasius to stand alone against the world, as in the days of Arius ; a Martin Luther to preach redemption by faith, and a William Tyndale with loving care and at the cost of his life to put the Bible into the common tongue; a Wesley and a Whitefield to lead rich and poor all over the country back to a simple soul-saving trust in the Atonement of the Son of God. To-day, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is winning converts in almost every land under the sun, while other faiths, Paganism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, are losing their adherents by the million (for the most part, alas, to a blank ignorance of God) ; Mohammedanism only holds its own because it does at least teach men some elements of truth, such as the worship of the One True God.

In every generation, faith in the divine Son of God has produced miraculous results in the lives of individuals. It has made the wicked man forsake his way. It turned Saul the persecutor into Paul the Apostle. It turned Augustine from a libertine into a saint. It made the gay and worldly John Bunyan the writer of the Pilgrim's

Progress. It made the careless young German, already acquainted with the inside of a prison for stealing, to become George Müller of Bristol, the man of Faith. In every mission field there are amazing trophies of the grace of God, and in every town in this land there are men and women who were once the slaves of sin and vice, and are now set free by faith in the Divine Son of God.

Dare anyone refuse to admit that the verdict of History endorses in most impressive fashion the prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ? The mustard-seed has become a tree. We cannot think that the triumphs of the Church and the soul-experiences of all its members are founded upon a tremendous misconception, upon the worship of a man as a God.

It is necessary to say a few words to meet those who admit the deity, or as they would prefer, the divinity of the Lord Jesus in word, but rob it of all special significance by claiming that there is an element of the divine in every man, and that He merely possessed it in an unusual degree. All the witnesses we have been examining, honestly sifted, decide against such a theory. Let the doubting reader turn up the references again and see. If it were true, any good man amongst us might be addressed with propriety, "My Lord and my God." Jesus Christ is again and again spoken of as God's Only Begotten Son. There is a striking contrast in the parable of the wicked husbandmen between the *servants*, the prophets, sent to ask for the fruits, and the "one son, his well-beloved," sent last of all.

It may be that these lines will fall into the hands of one who is still unconvinced that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, and rightly entitled to his worship. If such an one is honestly desirous of knowing the truth, let him write out and sign the following declaration: "I will pray daily to God, however little confidence I may feel that I shall be heard, to convince me of the truth concerning Christ, promising that if He shows me that He is my Saviour and my God I will follow Him and confess Him before the world, at any cost." Then let him study the verses quoted in this chapter, and the Bible records of the life of the Lord Jesus, beginning with the gospel of John. Those

who have dared honestly to follow this road have been led to a soul-saving faith. Those who dare not have no right to label their hesitation "honest doubt"; they are shirking the issue, with all its tremendous and eternal consequences.

REFERENCES.

The following passages of Scripture may be consulted in addition to those referred to above.

Our Lord's Claims to Deity.—Mark 14. 61-64; Luke 22. 66-71; John 10. 36, 3. 13, 5. 18, 12. 45, 14. 9, 10, 11.

The Witness of the Apostles.—Col. 2. 9; Titus 2. 13, 14 (R.V.); 1 John 5. 20; 2 Cor. 13. 14; 2 Peter 1. 16-18.

Amongst the enormous number of books bearing on the subject, the writer has found much help from the following:

The Fact of Christ, by Carnegie Simpson (1s.). An admirable argument founded upon the Character of our Lord. (The last chapter seems to me less satisfactory than the rest of the book).

Talks to Men, by R. A. Torrey (6d.). Brings out very powerfully the argument from the Resurrection.

Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord.—Ellicott.

CHAPTER II.

The Divine Authority of the Bible.

It is difficult to live in a tainted atmosphere and not to breathe it, not to let its poisonous elements enter into the very framework of our bodies. We young people, especially such of us as study science or literature, or move about amongst all sorts and conditions of men, soon learn that others, inside and outside the Churches, do not regard the Bible with the old time reverence. It is comparatively rare to find educated young people, or old people either, who still believe that we must take it to be entirely the Word of God, throughout inbreathed by the Holy Spirit, commanding and teaching not merely the opinions of gifted men, but the revelation of the Most High. Men are no longer willing to accept a clear word from a prophet, an epistle, or even a gospel, as utterly binding in its authority over their lives, conduct, and principles. It is common knowledge that in every city preachers are to be found who think they see errors of history and errors of doctrine in the Book which our fathers looked upon as infallible.

In these difficult days it is probably true that all thinking folk between sixteen and thirty, in the process of forming their life principles, must necessarily be tempted, at times, to give up their faith in the perfectness of the revelation of God, and to begin to pick and choose what they will believe and what they will obey, or, at least, to believe their beliefs so insecurely that they seem to hold their faith, instead of their faith holding them.

With this foreword let us turn to examine the evidence for the divine authority of the Bible. We must consider

1. The claims of the writers.
2. The endorsements of those claims.

Both are necessary. We do not need to believe in the pretentions of every religious quack, but on the other hand we shall not believe that men are speaking with divine authority unless they plainly tell us that they are doing so.

1. THE CLAIMS OF THE WRITERS OF THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR ONE ANOTHER.

Both the Old Testament and the New state clearly that the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), which they called " the Law," is the Word of God. " Behold," says Moses, " I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me " (Deuteronomy 4. 5). Five hundred and one times, about three times in every chapter, do these five books claim divine authority—" the Lord said unto Moses," or " God spake all these words." Nehemiah, centuries later, speaks of " the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel " (Nehemiah 8. 1).

David announced that at least one of his Psalms was taught him by God. His last words are recorded for us, beginning, " The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue " (2 Samuel 23. 2). Peter confirmed the claim ; " it was *needful* that the Scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David " (Acts 1. 16).

The Prophets state their majestic authority on every page of their pronouncements. It rings like an undertone, verse after verse, " thus saith the Lord of Hosts," through Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, even down to the little prophecy of Obadiah. Nehemiah takes up without hesitation the daring conviction they used to express that their words were more than human ; " yet many years," he says in his prayer, " didst Thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by Thy Spirit in Thy Prophets " (Neh. 9. 30). Zechariah, almost at the close

of the Old Testament canon, speaks of " the words which the Lord of Hosts had sent by His Spirit by the hand of the former Prophets " (Zech. 7. 12). Paul, Peter, and the writer to the Hebrews repeat over and over again that God was speaking through the old Prophets. A single reference must here suffice, that in which Peter says that these Prophets often did not understand the import of their own words ; they spoke them in ignorance but in faith, as the Spirit of Christ within them testified (1 Peter 1. 10, 11, 12).

We find similar claims in the New Testament. Paul repeatedly and in the most solemn manner declared that he was merely the mouth-piece of God. He rejoices that his converts received from him " the word of the message, even the word of God," and " accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God " (1 Thessalonians 2. 13). " Which things also we speak," he says, " not in the words which men's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth " (1 Corinthians 2. 13). In one remarkable passage (1 Cor. 7. 25 to 40), he admits that he is not sure of the inward divine voice, he " gives his judgment," and *thinks* also that he has the Spirit of God ! This makes his confident claim elsewhere all the stronger. Peter freely puts Paul's writings on a par with Holy Scripture (2 Peter 3. 15, 16). John, in the first verse of the Revelation, ascribes its origin to God; in his first epistle (1. 5) he says, " This is the message which we have heard from Him."

The whole canon of Scripture is summed up in two decisive pronouncements: " All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God " *; " No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost " (2 Peter 1. 21).

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*2 Timothy 3. 16.—It is true that the Revisers translate differently, but their reading has been very powerfully criticized, and in other similar constructions they usually if not invariably take the two adjectives together as the Authorised Version does. Such ancient Greek scholars as Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Chrysostom, and amongst moderns Scrivener and Tregelles, stand for the reading as we have quoted it.

2. THE EVIDENCES OF INSPIRATION.

It is impossible to set out in their full force even a half of the overwhelming proofs of the inspiration of the Bible without writing a large book. Several must be dismissed with the barest mention here. For instance, it is amazing, and beyond all human probability, that the collected works of some forty authors, written in three languages, extending over a period of more than a thousand years, and emanating from countries as far apart as Babylon and Rome, should furnish one coherent whole, instead of making a mere patchwork. It is all very well for the sceptic to declare that the Bible is full of contradictions; by following the simple rule of reading the context of apparently conflicting verses practically all the differences vanish away. When in building a great mansion it is found that without any planning on the part of the actual builders, all the materials, just so much and no more, are accurately supplied, with the shaped blocks for every corner exactly fitting in their place, and every iron girder of precisely the correct dimensions, it is obvious that behind the mason's labourers there has been a master mind planning the whole edifice. So it is with the Bible.

The grandeur of the moral teaching of the Book which even records and condemns the sins of its greatest saints —the falsehoods told by Abraham, the disobedience of Moses, the wickedness of David in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite, and the temporary cowardice of Elijah, furnishes another powerful argument. There are gems of truth, and elevated precepts, in the writings of heathen philosophers, but we should not dare to contend that their morality was beyond reproach. Marcus Aurelius was the purest and most enlightened writer of antiquity, but can we respect one who took the responsibility of murdering and torturing his subjects for no other crime than that of serving the Lord Jesus Christ, and who could only see brute beast obstinacy in the heroism with which they bore the sufferings he inflicted on them? The Bible stands alone in that its moral teaching never falls short of the highest standard, even when the writers lived in days of the most abandoned and universal wickedness.

Again, it cannot be denied that the Bible has done infinitely more to make men strong, and loving, and holy, and clean living, than all the other writings in the world put together.

We find another argument in the way in which the Word of God has defied all the efforts of men to extinguish it. No other book in the world has been the object of so many determined attacks in every age. It has been the victim of neglect, of violence, of criticism, and of ridicule. In the bad days of Ahaz and Manasseh the number of copies of the law of Moses was apparently reduced to one. Possibly a few others were in existence, but if so, they were lost sight of (2 Chronicles 34. 14). In the Diocletian persecution, at the beginning of the fourth century A.D., and indeed during the whole of the preceding centuries, the sacred writings were vigorously sought out by the heathen and committed to the flames along with their owners. Out of many thousands of Greek manuscripts of the whole or part of the New Testament which have come down to us, only two fragments of papyrus, comprising between them some sixty verses of the Gospels, can have been written earlier than the time of this tremendous ordeal for the Church and the Word. This helps to show how the Scriptures were hunted out and destroyed with unrelenting zeal. At the same time Porphyry, Celsus, and the philosophers of the age were pouring upon them all the bitter venom of their clever sarcasm and false accusation, and Marcion, Valentinus and the other heretics were rejecting one book and perverting the meaning of another. When Wycliffe translated the Latin Vulgate into English, Church and State united their forces to take the Bible out of the hands of the people, and to persecute and burn at the stake those who sought to distribute it. To a large extent they succeeded, but 170 copies of Wycliffe's version have survived to our own day. When William Tyndale took advantage of the advent of the printing press to publish his translation of the New Testament from the original Greek into the English tongue, the enmity of the Romish Church drove him out of England and finally hounded him to a cruel prison and a martyr's

death. His precious quarto sheets were all but seized as they issued from the press; he had to pick them up and flee with them by ship. The story is well known how a little later the Bishop of London sent Austin Packington the mercer, to buy up the whole edition under pretence of distributing it in England, whereas in fact it was delivered to the Bishop to be burned in public at St. Paul's Cross; but even this incident turned to the furtherance of the Gospel, because the purchase money enabled Tyndale, who was sadly in want of funds, to get to work with new and better editions. In spite of the public denunciations of the Bishops, it was not many years before every Church in England possessed an open Bible.

The whole history of the written Word of God reminds one of a long-besieged city. We go round about it, and find an old disused battery, with the broken and rusty remains of artillery stamped with the eagles of the Roman Empire; we go further, and unearth the dismantled guns bearing the triple crown of the Roman Papacy; we find all the shot and shell of the school of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Tom Paine, which thought to end the Bible in a generation, but is now itself so buried as to be all but forgotten. The battle is still raging, but it has shifted to a new quarter; the latest artillery bears the stamp of Science and Literary Criticism, served, alas, in many cases, by gunners flying Christian colours. In some countries, happily not so much in England, the cannon of the Papacy continues to sweep the ground between the Bible and the People. But we have no need to tremble for the safety of the beleagured city. The ruins of the earlier attacks foretell what happens to the later. Year by year the gallant efforts of the defenders of the truth drive the opposing forces to shift their ground once and again. There is within the city itself an abundant store of ammunition. Some of it has been in use in every age; some comes in fresh year by year, in the shape of reports of the triumphs of the gospel over heathen lives, or again it may be provided by the excavations of some buried city of Egypt, Syria, or Babylon. Still the flag is flying, "The Word of the Lord abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 25). There

are far more Bibles in the world to-day than ever before, and no other book approaches its circulation.

Another evidence for the inspiration of the Scriptures is to be found in the fulfilment of prophecy. First, let us see what it says of the history of the Jewish nation. We all know their story, how Jerusalem was besieged and taken by Nebuchadnezzar, again by Antiochus Epiphanes, again by Titus, and many a time since. It is pre-eminently the city of sieges. This would not be true of the other great world powers of antiquity, such as Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, or Greece. We know how the Jews have been an exiled and persecuted people, once in Babylon, and now all over the world, but yet they keep in unique fashion their nationality. Just at present, under the influence of the Zionist movement and the overthrow of the old bad regime in Turkey, they are returning by thousands to Palestine. All this is faithfully foretold in many striking prophecies, as, for instance, Deuteronomy 28. There all the abominable cruelties to which the Jews have been subjected throughout Europe and Asia are set forth. The sieges are described in verse 52, and the captivity in verse 64. How true it still is—"The Lord shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other." But besides the curses, the future blessings of restoration, now in process of fulfilment, are written by these men of old time (see, for instance, Isaiah 49). Who, by mere human wisdom, could have written in the year 606 B.C. such an age-long truism as this: "I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee with judgment, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jer. 30. 11). Frederick the Great of Prussia once turned suddenly on his chaplain, and asked him to prove the inspiration of the Bible in a word. The chaplain instantly replied, "The Jews, your Majesty."

The prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled with exactitude in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Avoiding all texts which might not specially refer to the hope of Israel, and using only those which clearly look forward to the coming Prince, we find the following:

The coming was to be preceded by a herald. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Isaiah 40. 3). "Behold, I send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple." (Malachi 3. 1).

The Messiah was to be born as a child in Bethlehem, after the lapse of seventy weeks; He would be of the seed of David. "Unto us a child is born" (Isaiah 9. 6). "But thou Bethlehem . . . out of thee shall come forth unto Me that which is to be the Ruler" (Micah 5. 2). "I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch; He shall reign as King" (Jeremiah 23. 5, 6). For the seventy weeks see Daniel 9. 24 to 27.*

Incidents in His life; the Ministry in Galilee; the gospel of deliverance; riding on the ass. "Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9. 1, 2). "To preach good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the broken hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives" (Isaiah 61. 1, 2, 3). "Thy King cometh unto thee . . . riding upon an ass" (Zechariah 9. 9).

The Betrayal, Death and Resurrection. "They weighed Me for my price, thirty pieces of silver . . . Cast it unto the potter" (Zechariah 11. 12, 13). "They shall look on Me Whom they have pierced" (Zechariah 12. 10). "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, the man that is my fellow" (Zechariah 13. 7). "Messiah shall be cut off" (Daniel 9. 27). "Neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy one to see corruption" (Psalm 16. 10).

More detailed, and if possible, clearer prophecies may be read in the twenty-second Psalm and in the amazing fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The whole analogy of the Passover offerings is also full of significance. A perfect male, in the prime of life, was to be killed at evening; no bone was to be broken; the sprinkled blood was to make an atonement. At the very time when the Passover lamb was killed in the temple of Jerusalem, there was

*An explanation of the dates is given in a note at the end of Chapter III. See Sir Robert Anderson's *Daniel in the Critic's Den.*

dying on the cross of Calvary the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Only the merest selection of passages is given, which have been abundantly fulfilled. There yet remain for fulfilment the majestic promises of the time when " He shall take His great power and reign."

Unfortunately, the arguments we have been piling up, the unity of the Bible, the unfailing grandeur of its moral teaching, its effect on human lives and characters, its victory over all attempts to destroy it, and the fulfilment of prophecy, are not likely to appeal to some readers in the least. The explanation is not far to seek. A man who has never read the Bible with any care will naturally fail to have noticed the force of any of the above points. Critics of the Book, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, have never so much as read it through. They could not recount the progress of the argument, from memory, in a single one of the Epistles. The historical stories may be familiar to them, but the inner teaching of the Bible, on which saints in all ages have fed their souls, has never entered their minds. Even the defenders of the Word are only too frequently in the same position. If we would believe in its Divine Authority, we must read the Book itself, not the books about it.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WITNESSED TO THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

If we are prepared to believe that Jesus Christ was the divine Son of God, in Whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, His verdict on the Scriptures will settle all doubts, because it is impossible for the Godhead to be mistaken.

We find that our Lord recognised that the Holy Spirit spoke through the Old Testament writers. Quoting from a Psalm, He said, " David himself said, in the Holy Spirit " (Mark 12. 36). We notice in passing that not only the divine but also the Davidic authorship of the Psalm is matainined. Again, in Mark 7. 10, 13, He recognises the

human and the divine in the origin of the Law; "For Moses said . . . but *ye* say . . . ; making void the word of God by your tradition."

Our Lord accepted as authentic the history of the Old Testament. He believed in the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 10. 15), the story of David and the Shewbread (Mark 2. 26), the Deluge (Matthew 24. 37), the story of Jonah in the whale's belly (Matt. 12. 40), the cleansing of Naaman (Luke 4, 27), the miraculous feeding of the widow at Zarephath (Luke 4. 26), the Serpent lifted up in the wilderness (John 3. 14), and the daily supply of manna (John 6. 49).

Our Lord also believed in and testified to the fulfilment of prophecy. "But that the Scriptures may be fulfilled" (John 13. 18); "How, then, should the Scriptures be fulfilled?" (Matt. 26. 54): words such as these were continually on His tongue.

It is unnecessary to show how He used the Old Testament to repel temptation, to silence controversy, and to form the basis for His moral teaching. Although He superseded the Law, He said, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5. 17).

His relation to the Old Testament may be summed up in two of His own sayings. "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10. 35); "Verily I say unto you, till Heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law, till all things be accomplished" (Matt. 5. 18). He claims very solemnly the Amen of God the Father for all His teaching, which must include all these quotations; "whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (John 12. 50).

For the obvious reason that it was not yet written, our Lord does not endorse, directly, the inspiration of the New Testament, although, as we shall see in the next chapter, He foretold that the Holy Spirit would speak through the Apostles.

Those who will not accept the Divine Authority of the Old Testament have made immense efforts to save some semblance of reverence for our Lord's Person, whilst refusing to believe His words as above recorded. We

may dismiss the notion that He knew that the Jewish view of their sacred Scriptures was erroneous, but that he seemed to acquiesce in it to avoid trouble, as morally impossible for one whose character was so transcendently holy. He never hesitated to run counter to the opinions of the Scribes and Pharisees when truth was at stake. It is widely taught that when He was made in the likeness of men He emptied Himself of His divine omniscience, and became subject to the current misconceptions of His time ; so that in ignorance He enforced with all His might theories of the inspiration of the Old Testament which modern research has discredited. The mere cold statement of such a doctrine carries with it its own death-warrant to Christian minds. It is true that our Lord's wisdom and knowledge grew up with Him ; it is true that the date of His final coming in power was veiled from His eyes. But it is an enormous supposition to conclude on these slender grounds that He based His conduct and teaching on a false foundation, and that the fulness of the Godhead leaned on a broken reed. His incarnation was not stained by human sin, nor was it nourished by human error. However, there are simple means of discovering whether His knowledge was really limited. All heresies crumble away when tested by *all* Scripture, though they may seem to stand firmly on the foundation of *one* Scripture. We ask, is there evidence that His knowledge of men and affairs did in fact exceed merely human knowledge ; we ask further, did He, after His resurrection, when He had laid aside the limitations of His flesh, still endorse the authority of the Old Testament. A very brief examination of the records will satisfy us on both points. He knew all about the chequered married life of the woman of Samaria ; He foresaw Peter's denial, and Judas' treachery, and His own Crucifixion ; He knew there was a colt tied at Bethphage, and that there was a fish in the Lake of Galilee with a shekel in its mouth. Numerous other incidents will suggest themselves to the reader. Even the common people remarked on the authority and confidence with which He imparted spiritual teaching, and contrasted it with the custom of the scribes.

It would indeed be incongruous if the great Miracle-worker was liable to error in His teaching.

After His resurrection, there was no change in our Lord's attitude to the Sacred writings. "Behoved it not," that is to say, "was it not *essential*, that the Christ should suffer?" (Luke 24. 26), He exclaimed to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Then He explained to them all the Scriptures, Moses and the prophets, in their references to Himself. Later, coming to the assembled apostles, He said, "All things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Me." (Luke 24. 44). Dare we think that His knowledge could be limited even after He rose from the dead?

Let us now pick up our scattered threads, and summarise the argument by an illustration. Some teachers speak of the inspiration of the Bible as though it were comparable with some great work of genius: we shall not be doing Tennyson's "In Memoriam" an injustice if we use it as an instance. But is it feasable to apply to the poem, great as it is, the testimonies we have read to the inspiration of the Bible? Can we imagine Christ saying of it, "The Scripture (*i.e.* writing) *cannot be broken!*" or would He have declared that the Holy Spirit spoke by Tennyson? Should we expect to find that events many centuries hence were clearly foretold and fulfilled? Does the poet ever give a hint that he got his lines from God Himself by a revelation?

There is only one logical ground on which it is possible to deny the Divine Authority of the Bible, and even that involves immense difficulties, some of which are set forth in the next chapter, and some have been given in the one preceding this. That is to accuse the four evangelists of hopeless misrepresentation of the words of our Lord. Putting aside the logical difficulties of such an accusation, let us realise once and for all what it involves to us as individuals. All we know of God becomes guess-work. If there is a Divine Being at all, we can only say "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." It becomes exceedingly improbable, as any psychologist will tell us, that there is any life beyond the present. There is no

real essential difference between right and wrong. We had better follow Nature, and each fight for his own hand, and push the weakling to the wall.

We are poor frail little barks sailing on the great sea of human destiny. There is a Chart put into our hands, that directs us by safe water-ways to a fair haven. A Divine Pilot will come on board, if we will give Him the tiller, and guide us to our home. Once, it may be, we trusted the Chart and the Pilot, and felt happy and secure. Now, we are in busier, more open waters, and we see big boats and little boats with their sterns towards the haven, disdaining our Chart and our Pilot. Shall we put both overboard? To do so is to drift out inevitably into the homeless ocean, fog-ridden and tempest-tossed. Some of us have heard already the melancholy moaning of its dark waters. Men think they can find some anchorage before they reach that ocean; they even hope, vainly hope, to drive their boats into the haven without Chart or Pilot. The truth is that although whole churches are trying to find an anchorage somewhere between faith in the Divine Authority of the Bible and the ocean of modern materialism, and a new way to Heaven without the blood of the Atonement, the anchors are continually dragging from place to place and usually get lost altogether, and the new way leads not to Heaven, but to hell.

REFERENCES.

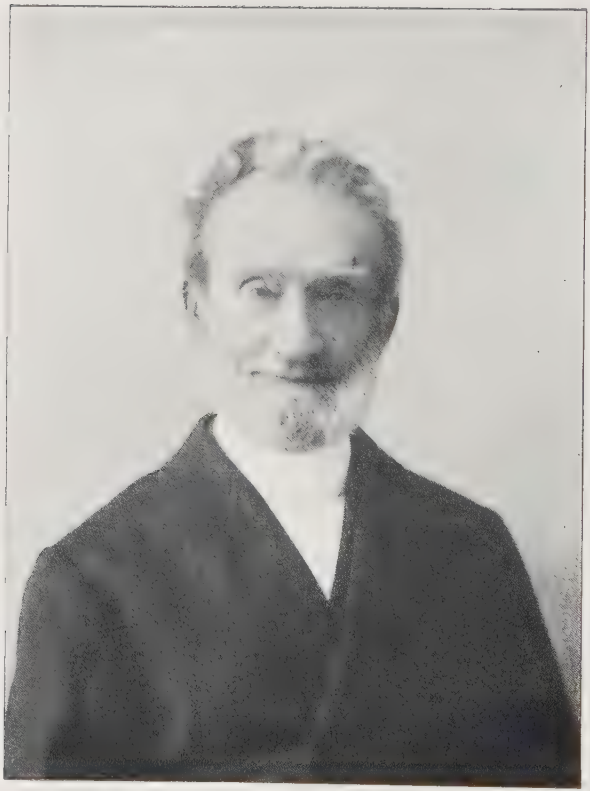
The following additional passages of Scripture should be consulted, claiming as they do Divine inspiration for the sacred writings in part or in whole.

Exodus 4. 10-12; Joshua 24. 2; Jer. 1. 9; Ezek. 2. 4; Luke 16. 17, 29, 31; John 14. 26: 16. 12-15; Acts 4. 25: 13. 33-35; Rom. 1. 2; 1 Cor. 2. 9-10: 14. 37: 15. 3-4; Galat. 1. 11-12; Eph. 3. 3-4; 1 Thess. 4. 2, 15; 1 Tim. 4. 1; Heb. 1. 1.

The writer has derived many helpful suggestions from the following books. Others are mentioned at the close of the next chapter.

Critics or Christ, H. Brown (S. W. Patridge).

Talks to Men, R. A. Torrey (6d.).



GEORGE MÜLLER.

CHAPTER III.

The Problems of Inspiration.

"In the latter day ye shall understand."—*Jeremiah.*

THE writer includes this chapter with some hesitation. It is obviously impossible in so short a space to deal with such a vast subject except in the most cursory fashion. Again, it is no help to those whose minds are happily free from intellectual difficulties to suggest to them the difficulties felt by others. What is set down here can only be regarded as one's own way of looking at the problems. Prayerful patience will solve our hard questions when all human help fails.

Nevertheless, it may be that a brief discussion of a few outstanding problems will be of assistance to someone. Let it be said at the beginning, that we write here for young men and women who think and study, in amateur fashion, and who really feel these difficulties. Others will do well to turn at once to Chapter IV.

We shall speak

1. Of the question of the inspiration of the New Testament.

2. Of the scientific, literary, and moral difficulties of the Old Testament.

1. THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

There is a present fashion of belittling the divine authority of the New Testament writers. Some say that they will hear and accept the words of Jesus Christ, but they decline to bow to the teaching of Paul, and Peter, and John, and the Evangelists. It is said that in all these, Jewish preconceptions have beclouded the truth,

and that the clearer light of our own modern teachers is necessary to dispel the clouds. That the aforesaid modern teachers all differ profoundly amongst themselves, and change their standpoint at least every generation ; that their opportunities and, it may be, capabilities for knowing, proving, and suffering for the Truth cannot be compared with those of the Apostles, does not seem to make men hesitate to rush out of the sunlight of the Word of God into a *very* dim twilight illuminated by sparks of human kindling. An old prophet foresaw that the inevitable result is a lying down in sorrow.

It is quite true that we have a sure foundation for our confidence in the divine authority of the Old Testament, in the direct testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have been studying His endorsements of the Holy Book which He held in His human hands. There is no room for doubt that the Scriptures He regarded as God-breathed were the same as our Old Testament. He Himself quoted from at least twenty-two of the thirty-nine books, and the New Testament writers quote from all but about seven. Even to those there are indirect references. Josephus, who lived from 37 to 97 A.D., writes that the Jewish Scriptures were given by inspiration, and although his mode of counting differs from ours, it is evident that he includes the same list as ours in the canon. Other contemporary Jewish writers, such as Philo of Alexandria, confirm this. The very fact that neither the New Testament writers, nor Josephus, nor Philo, accepted the old Jewish books written in the Greek language instead of Hebrew (or Aramaic), shows what a clear distinction was drawn between that which was inspired, and that which was merely of ancient and historical interest. These Greek books constitute what we call the Apocrypha. All, or nearly all, were written long before the Christian era ; in form they are not unlike the Old Testament, but in moral worth they cannot be compared with it. They are never definitely quoted by Christ or the Apostles, though there are some thoughts in common.

When, however, we turn to the New Testament, we know that our Lord could not have held it in His human

hands, and His endorsements of Scripture did not necessarily or directly refer to the twenty-seven books we bind together and read as part of the Word of God. Indeed, it was not till the latter years of the fourth century that Church councils, at Laodicea and Carthage, compiled the list which we now use of the canon of the New Testament. Somewhere about that time, perhaps a generation or two earlier, the twenty-seven books came to be bound up together. The oldest complete manuscript we have was written in the fourth century, and includes just these books, with two others, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas, compiled in the second century, added as a sort of appendix.

How then are we to know that the New Testament is inspired, and if so, what constitutes the New Testament? If the direct testimony of our Lord fails us, what have we left to trust in?

The answer falls under various headings.

1. OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST FORETOLD THAT THE APOSTLES WOULD BE GIVEN THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY GHOST FOR THEIR MINISTRY. Just to choose a few out of many passages, we may remind the reader of Mark 13. 2, "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost;" Matt. 10. 19, "It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak." In John 16. 12-15, we have some account given of the coming ministry of the Spirit; "He shall guide you into all truth." In John 14. 26, "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit . . . shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." Here we have the inspiration of the Gospels in a nutshell.

There is a very solemn word for anyone who rejects the teaching of the Apostles. Christ said, "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me; and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me" (Luke 10. 16). We cannot refuse credence to their writings without turning away the ear from God.

2. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT SUPERNATURAL POWER DID COME UPON THE APOSTLES. For instance, it is recorded that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell on them like tongues

of fire, and that they did as a matter of fact speak as the Spirit gave them utterance. Again, we are told of miracles of healing wrought by some of the New Testament writers, such as Peter, John, and Paul. In a few instances special spiritual gifts were given to men not in the actual circle of the Twelve, but contemporary with them, such as Philip the Evangelist and Agabus. In the next generation these miraculous gifts passed away.

Like the Old Testament writers whose claims were endorsed by our Lord Jesus Christ, the New Testament writers repeatedly assert that they are speaking by inspiration of God. We shall not repeat what was said in the previous chapter on this subject (see p. 29).

3. Other arguments drawn from THE LOFTY CHARACTER OF THE WRITINGS, and from their influence over history and character, have been glanced at in a section of the previous chapter. No one, from a comparison of the moral value of the Old and New Testaments, would venture to defend the proposition that the former was given by God, but not the latter.

We turn next to the other aspect of the problem, and ask, "How can we know whether our twenty-seven books are all God-given? How do we know that we have not included some that are of merely human origin, or on the other hand, excluded and it may be lost entirely some of the very works of God? Finally, how are we to know that the documents in our hands, none of them older than the year 270 A.D. or thereabouts,* are substantially the same as the actual writings of the Apostles?"

Let us admit from the outset that exact mathematical proof is in the nature of things impossible. We must be content to establish a reasonable probability. There is one argument which, though it may not convince an unbeliever, will be of enormous weight with the Christian. The scattered writings of the Old Testament Scriptures were collected by the Jews, somewhere about 250 B.C., into one book. The date, circumstances, and even the

*These third century copies of the gospels are but the merest fragments written on papyrus.

names of the men who were engaged in this wonderful work are quite unknown to us. They had to decide what to include and what to omit, and they had their difficulties in recovering the original text. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus Christ accepted their compilation as "the Scriptures that cannot be broken." If we reject the New Testament, in part or in whole, as it has come down to us, we are saying, in effect, that the Divine wisdom given to those unknown Jews was denied to the early Christians, and that the Martyr-heroes of the first three centuries, who won the awful battle against Roman cruelty and Pagan sophistry, were less taught of God than the men of the Great Synagogue who are said to have been responsible for the Old Testament canon. If we believe that God in His grace gave us the Word, we are bound to believe that He has also preserved us the Word. This is the supreme argument for the perfection of the New Testament.

But it is by no means the only argument. We are now perfectly certain that the writings in our hands are very nearly in their original state; that in spite of the total loss of the actual autographic manuscripts, and the hundredfold copying and recopying that took place before the art of printing was discovered, yet we can read still the very thoughts, and almost entirely the very words, of the men who themselves walked with the Lord on earth. The proof may be stated in this way. From Egypt, from North Africa, from Italy and from Syria, independent versions of the New Testament writings, more or less complete, have come down to us in the vernacular, and also in the form of quotations by the early Fathers. These versions date from the third and even the second century; the Fathers go back to the very days of the Apostles. All these witnesses, widely separated by time and space, agree, in the main, on a common text, which must therefore be older than any of them, so much older as to have acquired a position of high esteem and even reverence.

It has been asked, if we have already had to institute more than one revision, how can we be sure that there must not one day be another, and if so, what guarantee is there that we shall ever get back to the actual words

of the holy writers? It is admitted that the actual words are and always will be in doubt in a small percentage of verses of Scripture. But what change of doctrine, hope or practice has resulted even from the drastic revision of 1881? Dr. Hort estimates that "the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation can hardly form more than one thousandth part of the entire text."

It is in the nature of things impossible that our present reconstruction of the original text of the New Testament can undergo any important modifications. The Authorized Version of King James was based on a free editing of the sacred text at the hands of Jerome and others which gave rise to the Vulgate in Latin, the "Syriac" text in Greek, and the Peshitto in Syrian. This took place in the fifth century. Jerome died about the year 420 A.D. Since King James' time the whole world has been ransacked for old manuscripts, and many of great importance have come to light and received careful analysis, written in Greek, Latin, Syriac, various Egyptian dialects, and in the more recent Gothic, Armenian, and Anglo-Saxon. So thorough has been the search that it is impossible that enough material can yet be discovered to alter the sense of the many thousands of documents on which the Revised text is based. Two of the most important finds came from a monastery on Mount Sinai, the Greek Codex Sinaiticus, written in the fourth century, and a version of the old Syriac, before the time of the revision in Jerome's day.

We have recovered, therefore, an immense body of material by which to reconstruct the purest form of the text before Jerome's revision, and thus it has been found possible to sweep aside the accidental miscopyings, omissions, and commentator's additions which had crept into the text underlying the Authorized Version. In the arduous toil leading up to the Revised Version of 1881, the most important pioneer work in England was done by S. P. Tregelles, one of the early Brethren.

We repeat, all or nearly all the evidence as to the original text is now in our hands, and not more than a dozen words in a chapter present room for even a difference of opinion. There are not more than twenty or thirty

passages in the New Testament where there is real doubt as to a reading which would seriously alter the sense or include a new incident. All these are plainly indicated in the margin of a Revised Version Bible.* In some instances where there is strong reason to believe that a passage has been interpolated, it may nevertheless relate true and valuable facts. It has been rightly said that whoever handed down to us the passage, John 7. 53 to 8. 11, deserved well of the world. It must of course be remembered that many of the changes in the Revised Version are corrections, not of the Greek text, but of the translation.

Let us turn again to ask what evidence we have that our twenty-seven books constitute the Truth, the Whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth of God. For instance, could there be a twenty-eighth book somewhere, either lost or neglected by us? The answer is clear and conclusive. In all the copious writings of the early Christians, there is no reference to any book which they put on such a high level, now lost. Four or five writings of the first two centuries, such as the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, the Epistles of Barnabas, of Clement of Rome, of Polycarp and of Ignatius, and the Shepherd of Hermas have come down to us. They are of great value because of the way in which they quote our New Testament books, which must therefore have been still older and already highly reverenced. But their contents are, in the judgment of every generation of Christians, quite unworthy to be placed by the side of the New Testament books. In most of them, the writers themselves distinctly state and recognise their inferiority to the Apostolic writings. No one, except perhaps a mere individual here or there, has ever supposed any one of them to be inspired.

Turning to the positive side of the question, why do we accept each of the twenty-seven books now bound together as New Testament? Are any of them in doubt? What constitutes a right of entry to the canon?

This is much more difficult to deal with. It is admitted

*See, for instance, Mark 16. 9-end; Luke 2. 14; 22. 43, 44; 23. 34.

that in the second and third century some of the books which we include were not included. If reasonable evidence could be adduced that any of them were forgeries written at a later date, covered by the assumed name of some apostle to give them a pseudo-authority, we should reject them for certain.

This opens up an immense subject, and the interested reader should consult the references at the end of the chapter. We may say at once that there is overwhelming early evidence for nearly all our twenty-seven books. The four Gospels, Acts, and all the Epistles of St. Paul rest on a perfectly unassailable foundation. Irenaeus of Southern France (130 to 200 A.D.), Tertullian of Carthage (200 A.D.), Clement of Alexandria (160-220 A.D.), and the old Syriac Church all accept as completely unquestioned the authenticity and inspiration of these books. Justin Martyr (164 A.D.) quotes from the four Gospels. Most of our New Testament books are mentioned by name in the old Canon of Scripture found at Muratori, dated not later than 170 A.D. The very early writings of Polycarp, Ignatius, "Barnabas" (probably not the Barnabas of the Acts) and Clement of Rome, all before 120 A.D., quote, sometimes by express reference, from the Gospels, all Paul's Epistles, 1 John, Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter. Even the heretics who vexed the early Church accepted the authenticity and inspiration of various parts of the New Testament; thus Marcion (140 A.D.) based his heresy on the Gospel of Luke and Paul's Epistles, and Valentinus on the Gospel of John. There is no evidence that the heretics had other Apostolic writings before them. At the end of the second century there was in wide circulation a life of our Lord, the Diatessaron of Titian, composed by piecing together the four Gospels into one consecutive whole.

Concerning the above-mentioned books, then, it is quite certain that they were accepted as authentic and inspired from the earliest times. The evidence with regard to 1 Peter, 1 John, and James is just as conclusive, although there is some ground for believing that the early Syrian Church did not know them. They are, however,

freely quoted by the very earliest writers; so also is Hebrews, but it is not ascribed to Paul. Then, as now, the author remained unknown. The Revelation was known and accepted by Justin Martyr (164) and Papias (160), and with Jude and 2 and 3 John was included in the early Latin Bible and in the Muratorian Canon. When we remember how few relics we have of the first two centuries, it is evident that we have convincing testimony of the early date, apostolic authorship, and recognised inspiration of practically the whole New Testament, although certain Churches did not become acquainted with all the books for a couple of generations. It is easy to understand that private letters like the two epistles of John might not be widely known at first.

Most controversy has raged about the Second Epistle of Peter, which was not universally accepted, because not generally known, before the fourth century. The spiritual beauty and force of its teaching have however satisfied holy men during many centuries that it ought to be included in the canon, and there is, moreover, clear internal evidence that it was written by Peter.* The differing style of the first and second epistles is probably due to the help of Silvanus in the former.

We promised in a former chapter, on account of the fundamental importance of the subject, to show that the four Gospels were written by contemporaries of the events they describe, and by the men whose names they bear; that they were written so early, in fact, that they cannot by any possibility be the outcome of the growth of a legend, gathering wonders as it is handed down from father to son, as has happened with the legends of the miracle-working Romish "saints." We have already shown that these four Gospels were in the hands of the

*Note, for instance, characteristic Petrine expressions, *cf.*, 1 Peter 1. 19 with 2 Peter 3. 14 (Greek). Jude, whose short epistle is full of quotations (v. 14, 15 from the book of Enoch), makes use of many expressions recalling 2 Peter 2, picking out the most striking phrases, using the past tense where Peter used the future (*cf.*, Jude 4 with 2 Peter 2. 1), and definitely referring to the words of the apostles of the Lord (*cf.*, Jude 18 with 2 Peter 3. 2, 3).

very earliest Christian writers, such as Justin Martyr (164 A.D.) and Marcion the heretic (140 A.D.); that the Gospel of Luke was already so old and respected by that time that Marcion could make it the basis of his heresy. It would take too long to enter into a full proof of the authenticity of all four Gospels; we must content ourselves by choosing just this one, the Gospel of Luke.

In the first place, if, as the critics say, the title merely means that the tradition was handed down through many lips from Luke, and only committed to writing many years later, why is it carried back to so obscure a personage as *Luke?* Luke was but the mouthpiece of Paul; why not trace the so-called tradition back to the great Apostle? Even Renan the sceptic saw the force of this argument, and after advocating the "tradition" theory, gave it up in a later edition of his book. There is very convincing internal evidence that the third Gospel was written by a physician, and that it was written by a companion of Paul in his travels. Again, we notice in the opening verses that the writer claims to be an accurate and well-informed historian, but does not claim to have witnessed our Lord's life or death.

It will probably be allowed that whoever wrote this Gospel also wrote the Acts. Tradition is unanimous on this point. The one takes up where the other leaves off. Both are addressed to Theophilus, and in Acts a "former treatise" to the same individual is referred to. The very distinctive style of the writer pervades both books.

We believe that the writer was a physician, not because the fact is anywhere stated, but from internal evidence of phraseology. There are in the two books at least 23 absolutely technical medical expressions, used by no other New Testament writer, but common in the works of Hippocrates, Galen, and other Greek medical writers of the period. Strange to say, a number of these remain to this day technical terms, such as "diagnosis," "syndrome," "dropsical," "dysentery," "thrombi." These occur only in Luke and the Acts in the whole New Testament. Further, in these two books, four different words are used expressing different sorts of bed or couch.

Only Luke quotes the proverb, " Physician, heal thyself." He is careful to specify the *right* hand (Luke 6. 6 ; 22. 50), just as every medical student is taught to write carefully in his notes which side of the body is affected. He remarks in some instances whether an ailment was congenital or acquired, as in several passages in the Acts.

We said moreover, that the writer must have been a companion of Paul in his travels. Several times in the Acts, the third person suddenly, without note or comment, changes to the first. These are called the " we " passages. One is in Acts 16, beginning at verse 10. The narrative of Eutychus, and the story of the shipwreck, are other instances. It is exceedingly interesting to notice how the rapid sketch of the Apostle's adventures suddenly fills up into a detailed picture in the " we " passages, all sorts of little incidents being mentioned. Obviously, the writer of the Acts joined Paul in his travels at these times. There is another evidence of the close association of this writer and the Apostle Paul brought out in the accounts given in 1 Cor. 11, and in Luke 22, of the Lord's Supper, where the wording of our Saviour's charge is almost identical. The other Gospels express the same sense but in quite different words.

We ask, therefore, where in the circle of the Christian Church mentioned by name in the New Testament can we find a physician, a companion of St. Paul, but not an eye-witness of the earthly ministry of our Lord? Only one answer can possibly be given. Luke was the beloved physician (Col. 4. 14) ; he remained close by Paul's side to the end (2 Tim. 4. 11) ; he is never mentioned in the narratives of our Lord's work or Passion. No one would be so wild as to suggest that all these technical medical terms, and the added details of the " we " sections, were cleverly introduced by a second century forger to give a verisimilitude destined only to be noticed in the nineteenth century !

What do we gain by all this? First, we see the " Second Century Myth " theory of the Gospels, diligently taught by Strauss, Baur, and the Modernists, come crashing down. Even Rationalists like Harnack admit as much. Second,

we learn that the early Christian tradition as to the authorship was true. It is only a step further to admit that Luke's narrative, with its fourfold corroboration by Matthew, Mark, John, and Paul is also true.

It would be just as convincing to prove the authenticity of each of these other four, but space forbids.

2. THE HISTORICAL, MORAL AND SCIENTIFIC DIFFICULTIES OF INSPIRATION.

Anyone who attempts to defend the inspiration of the Bible will have to face a hurricane of questions. How can the opening chapters of Genesis be reconciled with the established facts of scientific discovery and with the current principles of scientific deduction, such as the theory of evolution? How long has man lived on the earth? Must we believe the narratives of the miraculous in the Old Testament, such as the adventures of the children of Israel in Egypt, the Sinaitic desert, and Palestine? When the Bible appears to clash with the newly-discovered evidence of the monuments of Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria, which shall we accept? What are we to make of the apparently stern, hard Being whom the patriarchs and early Jewish national heroes worshipped as God, so unlike Him Who is revealed to us in the Lord Jesus Christ? And is it true that large parts of the Old Testament were written hundreds of years after the events which they record, and by other hands than those whose names they bear? These questions, and a hundred more, clamour for an answer.

Without attempting to chop off all the heads of the Hydra of modern criticism, we shall content ourselves with stating a few general principles, leaving the reader to apply them to his own particular problems. Let it be remembered that these problems are not worth arguing about except with a small minority of the critics. There are some who are perfectly honest in their questioning. They say that they will not, like the Catholics, worship relics that are historically incredible or scientifically

unsound. They will not turn from the alleged martyr's bones or wood of the True Cross, to put faith in a discredited Book. But with earnest purpose and constant research they still seek to know the Truth, determined that when they find it, they will die for it.

Men or women of this type are rare, but it is a joy to be able to turn their eyes to the historic Christ, and to see them find in Him the Truth. Everyone that is of the Truth heareth His voice.

The average questioner does not belong to this class. He has no settled determination to search for the Treasure hid in the field, to sell all that he has and to buy it. To such a man we can only say that it is not he who is the critic. The Word of God is the critic; his thoughts and motives are the subject of the criticism (Heb. 4. 12, Greek) For such a man to turn the book inside out, to throw away this and toy with that, is exactly like a South Sea Islander investigating a loaded revolver. Every year hundreds of young men and women doubt and question and reject the Bible, and the result is their eternal ruin; often their moral ruin too.

1. Our English Bible is only a Translation of a Traditional Text. A number of difficulties would vanish away, if we could refer to the original writings. In a few passages in the Old Testament the true reading seems to be hopelessly lost. For this reason it is rather theoretical to discuss whether the Bible as originally written was verbally inspired, word for word, as well as thought for thought. We are concerned, not with the original, but with the Book in our hands, God-breathed and God-preserved.

No doubt many of the numerical puzzles of the Old Testament are due to errors of transcription by old copyists.*

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* As, for example, 1 Samuel 13. 1—"Saul was a year old when he began to reign (Hebrew—see R.V. margin.) 2 Samuel 24. 13—"Seven years of famine;" compare 1 Chronicles 21. 12—"Three years of famine."

2. The Principle of a Gradual Revelation. It is a fundamental law of statesmanship that a ruler cannot deal with a wholly uncivilized people—

"Your new-caught sullen races, half devil and half child"

—as with the population of a European country. He must of necessity seem harsher; justice must be swift and heavy-handed; right and wrong must be reduced to a few simple arbitrary principles; he must maintain the terror of the law, and the gold and purple of his dignity. Anything less than this will seem weakness in the people's eyes.

Something of the same conception enters into our dealings with children. It is right that a child should know that punishment will follow quickly on the heels of wrong-doing, and that his code of morals should be "you must" and "you mustn't." It is quite fitting that he should think that his parents care infinitely more for him than for the rest of the world's children. Later, he comes to find out that his father's heart is large enough to take in many besides himself, and when he leaves school, rewards and punishments become slow and uncertain, and more moral than physical.

It was impossible that a primitive people should learn to comprehend God by any other discipline. Conceive of a world of savages watched over by a loving God Who sought means of making Himself known to them. Must He not seek first some responsive individual and his descendants, and generation by generation reveal a little and a little more, as they might be able to bear it? They must come first to know His Power and Eternity, then His Justice must be impressed upon them by signal rewards and punishments, and His Love by peculiar favours. At last there would be a sufficient comprehension in the world of the elements of Deity, to make a fuller revelation possible.

This is just the history of God's dealings with our race. He appeared in simple, almost human form, to the patriarchs; to Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham; then He chose for Himself the Jewish nation; finally, He showed

to the whole world the Brightness of His Glory, and the express image of His Person, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

All this is plainly declared by our Lord Himself. "It was said to them of old time . . . but *I* say unto you," rings through the Sermon on the Mount. Part of the old law was given "for the hardness of your hearts." Here we find a key to an immense number of perplexities, as, for instance, the so-called Vindictive Psalms.

Two fallacies lurk in the argument, which have brought it into disrepute. We are not entitled to say, "Therefore the old writers held distorted views of the Truth." Every revelation of God is perfect in itself, but it may be partial. We take our piece of smoked glass, and look at a crescent sun partially eclipsed by the moon; our sight detects only half the sun's full glories, and even that has to be modified lest it blind us, but it is a pure unsullied light, and all the spectral elements of normal sunlight are present in it. By and bye, the moon passes away, and the full orb is revealed. It is very noteworthy that the New Testament always claims to fulfil the Old, never to correct it.

Nor are we entitled to say that the revelation of Christ, as taught us by His apostles, can be superseded by any supposed light of modern discovery. It is true that He needs to be interpreted afresh to the changing needs of every generation, but in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, and no mere man can add to His teaching.

3. Miracles. When a European power wishes to influence a savage population, it overawes it with a gunboat or a railway. When Divine Power first seeks to make itself known to mankind, it is incredible that miracles should be lacking. How else should an ignorant and degraded race possibly feel that there existed such a thing as that Power, if they did not see it in exercise?

Men say that we do not see miracles to-day, and therefore they can never have been. As a matter of fact, miracles of lives revolutionised by the power of the Gospel, and miracles of answers given to believing prayer, are so common that most of us cease to wonder at them.

It is wholly short-sighted for a man who believes in God to object to miracles on the ground that God will not reverse His own laws in Nature. What the objector really means is that He will not reverse *our present conception* of the laws of Nature, which may be, and usually is, quite inadequate.

Let us give an illustration. In an immense number of cases, physicians discovered that in patients affected with loss of speech due to some gross brain disease, the damage was always on the left side of the brain, and for years this passed as an infallible law of Nature. A few cases in which the trouble was on the right side were discredited or explained away—were treated, in fact, just as the critics treat miracles. Eventually it was found that each half of the brain governs the opposite half of the body, and that in right-handed people the left side of the brain, being the dominant half, controlled the speech functions. All the patients with speech trouble associated with disease of the right brain were left-handed. The law has therefore to be re-stated in the light of fuller knowledge.

If we understood the Divine Purpose throughout, we should see that although the raising of Lazarus is contrary to the usual laws of life and death, it is quite in keeping with the age-long law of God. The stars shine every night, but some comets have only been seen once in human history.

It is a mistake to suppose that miracles are scattered haphazard throughout the Bible history. They nearly all relate to three critical periods, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the apostasy in the days of Ahab and his successors, and the foundation of the Christian Church. Remarkable happenings are recorded at other times, but they are seldom actually supernatural.

4. Scientific Difficulties. If due weight is allowed to this argument, the remaining scientific difficulties of the Bible will cluster, for the most part, about the origin of the world and of the human race. Some years ago, the Deluge might have been adduced as a difficulty, but a very ordinary acquaintance with geology or even geography will convince anyone that the flooding of an immense

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area is one of the commonplaces of our world's past history. There are still to be seen the borings of marine shell-fish on the pillars of a temple to Jupiter Serapis near Naples, showing that it must have sunk beneath the sea and risen again. Sir E. Shackleton's expedition to the Antarctic in 1908 found recent shells high up on a mountain, which had evidently been under water not long ago. Just as I write, the sea is washing ashore on the East coast of England the relics of some buried city. Local upheavals and depressions of the earth's surface, sufficient to submerge wide areas of land, have taken place constantly. In past geological ages nearly every mountain in England was beneath the ocean. Professor Wright, a few years ago, brought conclusive evidence before the Geological Society* that within recent times, since the advent of man in the world, the area now occupied by Persia, Armenia, and Turkestan, was deeply under water. It is, I think, quite legitimate to conclude that the area submerged by the Noachian deluge included no more than the *then known* world, and that the animals preserved alive included no more than the species then known. Immense zoological and other difficulties are involved, which are none the less real in that they may not appeal to those who lack a scientific training, if we take any other view.

With regard to the origin of the world, and particularly of the human race, it is true that there are a few difficult problems to be solved. Their significance has often been exaggerated. It is highly unfortunate that nearly all the defenders of the Bible, in this connection, are very unsatisfactory reading to the young Christian with a scientific education, and many whose faith is hereditary, not personal, have been stumbled thereby. Some of the apologetics are full of mis-statements of the well-ascertained facts of science, and the authors have never grasped its

*Quarterly Journal Geological Society, 1901, p. 244.—At Trebizond, on the Black Sea, there is a raised beach 650 feet up a mountain. The Caspian, the Sea of Aral, and Lake Balkash, like the Dead Sea, have no outlet, but their waters are still comparatively fresh. They must therefore be of recent origin, geologically speaking.

real arguments in consequence of their lack of the necessary education. It discourages a young soldier very much when he can see the mistakes in his general's tactics. On the other hand, many so-called defenders fling recklessly away the essential verities, and appear never to have realized that the divine Son of God must surely have known more about these problems than we do, and that if He accepted the inspiration of Genesis, we must.

One might venture to make an appeal to evangelists and others who have the privilege of putting the Gospel before those who have been taught all the modern scientific theories of the origin of the world and of the human race. Do not argue with them about evolution and the opening chapters of Genesis. Saving faith is not concerned with the interpretation of these chapters, but with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement. They will imagine that the preacher who tells them that the world was furnished in six literal days by successive acts of creative power is as ignorant or as perverse as the man who proclaims that the world is flat ; everything that he says will be regarded with suspicion. We ought not to let side issues block the way to the Cross, and for the unconverted these problems are only side issues.

The Christian, however, dare not fling contemptuously aside what the Lord Jesus Christ made the basis of His teaching (see chapters II. and III.). The unfolding of events in the first chapter of Genesis is so remarkable in itself, and agrees so well with the successive stages of life from plants to marine life, birds, mammals, finally culminating in man himself, as revealed to us in the Record of the Rocks, that it would be rash indeed to relegate this and the succeeding chapters to the realm of myth, even if difficulties of interpretation were greater. The Bible was written to reveal God to us, not to teach science in precise terms. Much has been read into it by the Church in the past (such as the date 4004 B.C.), which is not necessarily there.

When we who have been taught from childhood that the Scriptures are inspired from cover to cover first come into real touch, whether it be in the conversation of our

friends, in some lecture or book, or in the class-room of a University, with the evolutionary and other doctrines of the biological and anthropological sciences, we are strongly tempted to jump to the conclusion that the whole Bible is shaken from its throne. The scientific facts and theories are put before us in dogmatic form, as established truths, by teachers who have usually no sympathy at all with our faith. We see the force of their illustrations, and cannot escape from the grip of their logic. So we think that they are all right, and that the Christian revelation must therefore be all wrong.

If we had but the patience and humility to see it, this is really the judgment of a half-educated child-mind. We teach children that everything is very right, or very wrong; a child's world is like a moonlight scene, all very dark and very light. The advent of the sun throws a flood of light over much that was black, and the sharp contrasts disappear. When we take up a subject first, our teachers have to bring it before us in the dogmatic childish fashion. After five or ten years of study and research into the underlying facts, when we begin to think for ourselves and perhaps to teach others, we find that around every island of knowledge there is a wide ocean of ignorance, and conflicting evidence encircles us in every direction. All science is edged with mystery. When we are one and twenty we rebel at this, and have no use for theories that clash. After a while we get accustomed to finding them everywhere. We do not give up what we *do* know because of the mystery beyond. The surgeon has little or no idea what the functions of the appendix may be; there are theories, which he may believe or not as he pleases. But in the presence of a patient whose appendix has perforated, he knows that to remove it will bring life and health, and to leave it will mean death. He acts on the knowledge gained by a life-long experience, and puts aside what he cannot, and happily, need not understand. So, in time, we find that it is childish to give up the Bible, and with it our prospect of Eternal Life, because we cannot explain parts which are not essential either for salvation or for daily living.

Some of the very princes of science have found it possible to be earnest Christians and believers in the Word of God. We recall with pride Lord Kelvin, the physicist; Dana, the geologist; and even G. J. Romanes, the zoologist, in the evening of his days. There are scores of University men in the foreign mission field who have faced the problems of science, and have nevertheless given their whole lives to preach the Gospel and to disseminate the Scriptures.

There lies in the Bodleian Library at Oxford a confession of faith in "God's written word written in Holy Scripture" signed by no fewer than 617 members of the British Association for the year 1865.

Some one may accuse us of intellectual dishonesty in taking up such an attitude; they may imagine that we are trying to hold on to the Bible in the teeth of convincing facts that disprove its authority. That is not a fair deduction. There are no convincing facts that disprove its authority. Each may discover for himself more than one possible way in which the inspired narrative squares with the well-accredited observations (I do not say the theories) of the scientist. There may be difficulties, and he may not expect that his ideas would be convincing to any but himself, but the Bible is full of mysteries that elude our grasp, just as the sciences, and engineering, and medicine, and economics are full of unsolved problems. Happily, there is abundance of light besides, and in daily life we do not throw away a whole letter because a word here and there is blurred.

If, as we believe, the eternal God of infinite Truth and Wisdom is at once the Creator and Controller of all material things, and the Author both of holy Scripture and of natural law, then it stands to reason that conflict between science and revelation is an impossibility. God cannot deny Himself. We are short-sighted; our vision of these mysteries is blurred; we think we see conflict where there is none. Truth can always afford to wait. The quest is not in vain. "In the latter day ye shall understand."

REFERENCES.

The following books will be found full of valuable information. They are written in a spirit of devout enquiry that inspires confidence.

The Bible in the Church.

Introduction to the Study of the Gospels.

History of the Canon of the New Testament.

These three masterpieces by Bishop Westcott are getting old now, but they are still first-rate authorities.

The Problem of the Old Testament, James Orr. Thoroughly up-to-date; shatters the critical analysis of the Old Testament to atoms. Is the work of a scholar with a world-wide reputation.

Introduction to the New Testament, Salmon. Another scholarly work, serving to amplify Westcott's writings and bring them up to date.

The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation, by an American author, once a sceptic, presents a very striking and original line of argument dealing with the principles of gradual revelation.

NOTE ON DANIEL 9. 24-27.

See page 35.

The prophecy declares that from the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem to the cutting off of Messiah shall be $7+62=69$ "weeks," literally "sevens." Greek history fixes the date of accession of Artaxerxes as 465 B.C. Therefore, the beginning of the prophecy is Nisan (March) 445 B.C. (Neh. 2). Now, $69\times7=483$, and it appears at first sight as though the terminal date should be 39 A.D., which is too late. But the Greek year was 365 days, whereas the prophetic year is the ancient luni-solar year of 360 days (*c.f.*, Revelation 12. 14, "a time, times and half a time" = $3\frac{1}{2}$ years; 13. 5, "forty-two months;" 12. 6, "1260 days"). Now, $5\times483=2415$ days $=6.6$ years, bringing the time down to 32 A.D., the probable year of our Lord's crucifixion in the 18th year of Tiberius Cæsar (*c.f.*, Luke 3. 1). Sir Robert Anderson shows that the prophecy works out to the very day.

CHAPTER IV.

The Gospel.

"Make me, keep me, pure within."—*Wesley.*

If Jeremiah were living to-day, he would still have to declare, "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5. 30, 31). The meaning is given in his next chapter. "They have healed also the hurt of My people lightly (that is, on the surface only), saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (6. 14). Unfortunately, we have lost the faculty of being shocked at what is common, so we no longer regard it as a wonderful or a horrible thing that a false gospel is preached.

The teaching of the New Testament is perfectly plain on these simple points.

1. That we are all sinners in God's sight, though we may not be vicious in the eyes of our neighbours.

2. That after death comes judgment, and the doom of the lake of fire for ever.

3. That the Lord Jesus Christ bore in the room and stead of every believer the punishment for every sin, and more, the very sins themselves, on the cross of Calvary.

4. That "whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have eternal life."

That is the Gospel. There is no other way to escape judgment or to reach Heaven, and those who preach any other way, however honestly, lovingly or powerfully, are offering useless quack remedies for a deadly disease, and are morally guilty for the souls whom they delude and lead astray from the way of Eternal life.

I.—SIN. II.—JUDGMENT.

Leaving the reader to search out for himself the first and second of these great principles with the aid of the references appended, we shall endeavour to establish the third and fourth.

III.—ATONEMENT.

It is a most dangerous error to hold that the death of the Lord Jesus was no more than a crowning act of self-sacrifice, or a final and convincing proof of the Love of God. Both these are of course gloriously true, but they are only a small part of the truth. It is altogether misleading to think that He perished a helpless martyr like Savonarola, or the victims of Queen Mary's cruelty in the fires of Smithfield. There was willingness to suffer, not helplessness. Isaiah carefully distinguishes when he says, "*We* did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted" —that is, we thought Him another unfortunate sufferer in the cause of Truth; "but He was wounded for *our* transgressions; He was bruised for *our* iniquities, and with His stripes we are healed. The Lord (not Pilate and Caiaphas) hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53. 4, 5, 6). The whole chapter proves most conclusively that Christ died in the room and stead of every believer.

The whole system of Jewish sacrifices foreshadows clearly the vicarious nature of our Lord's death. The Israelites were taught to believe that their sins fell on the heads of the bulls and goats whose blood they would shortly see flowing; the goat died for the sinner. Such a conception seems absurd to us; it was a twilight notion, pointing on to the sacrifice of which John Baptist spoke when he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29). The very word "Lamb" spoke of atonement.

Abundant proof of this doctrine may be obtained from such passages as are referred to in the appendix to this chapter, and indeed it does not rest on a few isolated tests, but is woven into the very fabric of the Gospels and

Epistles. Here we will merely quote Peter's testimony: "Who His own self bore our sins in His Body upon the tree" (1 Peter 2. 24); and Paul's; "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3. 16).

The words of the Lord Jesus Himself must be noticed. "The Son of Man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20. 28). The Greek word "for" here means "instead of," and cannot mean anything else. It is very significant that although our Lord "took away the sins of the world," gave Himself a ransom on behalf of all men (1 Tim. 2. 5), and is the propitiation or atonement on behalf of the whole world, yet we are not told in Scripture that He died instead of *all*, but instead of *many*, and the passages speaking of His substitution are addressed to believers. He suffered *on behalf of* all the world; *as a willing substitute* for believers.

Such an atonement would have been valueless had a mere man been the substitute. One could but die for his own sins, he could not redeem a lost and guilty world. Christ Who died for us had no sins of His own to suffer for.

"But spotless, innocent and pure
Our great Redeemer stood."

He was possessed of the full Deity. His life was not that of a single man, weighing light in the scale against the wickedness of millions. He was the only begotten Son of God, and His life's worth would pay the redemption price for the whole human family a thousand times over —a Cullinan diamond for a heap of common, dirty stones.

Human nature rebels at this teaching, and weak men and women, who have seen evidence enough to convince them of the divine authority of the statements we have quoted, begin to shuffle and to let go the truth. Some one asks, "Would English justice permit a judge to punish a substitute, even a willing substitute, in the place of the guilty person? Can God do so without impairing His justice?"

Those who fail to appreciate the justice of the Atonement are all being misled by some inadequate

"illustration." There are several elements entering into the course of human justice which are lacking when we look at the final judgment of the world. Our law courts exist not only to dispense retribution but also to reform the man who has gone astray, and to warn others against copying his crimes. Before the Great White Throne it will be too late for reformation, and too late for warning.

An old and well-known story brings out another point of difference. It is related that a judge once had before him his dearest friend, and the man was obviously guilty. He showed his justice by inflicting the heaviest fine that the law would allow, and his kindness by paying every penny of it out of his own pocket. We can admire such an action, but even so, the king and parliament who made the law might have been dissatisfied, and so might the party injured by the wrong-doer. All analogies fail when God is at once the Lawgiver, the Judge, the injured Party and the Substitute.

We do not owe any explanation, as a matter of fact, to those who call in question the justice of God. His infinite Holiness towers above that of the most righteous judge in our British Courts, just as His Power, that formed the mountains, the oceans, and the skies, towers over the might of the British Sovereign. We cannot understand or conceive of His Holiness.

In our blood are millions of tiny unicellular organisms, called leucocytes. They have no mouths, nor heads, nor limbs, nor sight, nor hearing, yet they are alive. Perhaps we have each as many of them as there are inhabitants in the world. Shall we illustrate an absurdity by an absurdity, and suppose that one of these creatures, of which it would take twenty to make up the thickness of this paper, begins to express dissatisfaction with our moral character and actions? A leucocyte can as well sit in judgment upon our actions, as we can upon God's.

IV.—SALVATION.

Salvation comes by believing on Christ. A dozen passages come to mind to prove this. We will here be

content with the immortal John 3. 16. More are given in the appendix.

The man of the world rushes in with a host of objections. If that is all, why are not the immense majority of Europeans saved men? Most of them have been accustomed from their infancy to believe, after a certain lukewarm fashion, in the claims of Jesus Christ. If that is all, what moral force can there be in Christianity to make the drunkard sober, or the oppressor kind, or the vicious pure minded? If that is all, it is said, Christianity must be a matter of education along certain narrow lines, because how can a man's will compel his beliefs? Consequently, many people sit down passively complaining, "I want more evidence before I can be a Christian."

Perhaps an illustration of a personal nature may help us to thread our way through these doubts. I remember when I was house surgeon of a large provincial hospital, that one evening a working man was brought up suffering from a strangulated hernia. The visiting surgeon was summoned, and explained to the patient that only an operation, of a simple character and involving little risk, could save his life. The man refused. After a good deal of arguing, the surgeon gave up in despair and walked out of the ward.

One could scarcely let the poor fellow sign his own death warrant without a further effort, so I tried my hand at reasoning with him. I said, "The doctor tells you that if you stay as you are, nothing can save your life, but that quite a simple operation will cure you. He has treated hundreds of cases like yours. Won't you leave yourself in his hands?"

"I ain't a'going to have an operation."

I tried again. "But he knows much more about it than you do. You want to get well again, don't you?"

"Oh, yes; I've got a wife and two children dependent on me. I must get well."

"Then why not leave it to the surgeon to do what he thinks best? You believe what he says, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," said the man, "of course I believe every word he says, but I ain't a'going to have an operation."

That last answer is interesting and significant. The man undoubtedly wanted to get well, he professed to believe the doctor's words, but he would not give himself up to him for treatment. The fact was, of course, that he did *not* believe in the surgeon, in spite of an appearance of civility.

When Paul said to the jailor at Philippi, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," (Acts 16. 31), what did it involve for the jailor to believe with a real, whole-hearted, soul-saving faith? Far more than to doff his cap, bow his head, and say, "I am a Christian." It meant that he saw himself loaded down with sins, and all those sins transferred to that Cross. It meant that he took that Crucified One as his God, to be served and worshipped with every fibre of his being. It would mean, no doubt, persecution, and probably loss of his employment. It means no less to-day. It is a mockery for a man to say, "I believe in Jesus Christ," if he does not give Him the place of supreme Deity in his heart, or if he goes on carelessly piling up sin after sin to be fresh thorns on that sacred head. Belief which does not lead to a very sincere repentance and to a giving up of oneself to His worship and service, is a verbal belief worth no more than the words of my patient, and is the passport to death, not life.

Can a man *compel* his belief, then? Let us look again at the illustration. In all probability, the man only knew in a general way that the surgeons at that hospital were highly respected in their profession, and that they had many successes and some failures. That knowledge has been enough to enable hundreds to trust them, in spite of the risk, and to receive healing at their hands. Their faith has been very partial, and doubts and fears have crept in, but they have had enough to lead them to act on it, and their lives have been saved thereby.

God does not prove to all the world the facts concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in such a fashion that it is wholly impossible to reject them. He gives enough evidence to lead a reasonable person to admit the possibility, if not the probability, that Christ is all that He has claimed to

be. What is that evidence? Part of it is such as has been described in previous chapters—the evidence of His life; the writings of the apostles. Part of it we may read for ourselves in the effects of faith in Christ on our friends and acquaintances, especially such as may have been notoriously sinful. It rests entirely with us whether we will choose to believe, that is, to give Him all He claims of us, or choose to reject.

We have been speaking, so far, of the Gospel as the power which is to make us free from sin. Blessed as this is, however, it is only half the Gospel. One of the greatest hymns in our language prays,

"Make me, keep me, pure within."

The good news speaks not only of making pure, but of keeping pure.

Calmly, quietly, as though it were an easy matter, the writer to the Hebrews says, "Let us lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12. 1). Either the words are the power of God, or a bitter mockery. How many men and women, thinking of lost battles they have fought in the past with some besetting sin—ill-temper, strong drink, lust, cowardice, pride, worry—reply despairingly, "I am enslaved under sin, and I cannot give it up." The seventh of Romans echoes their experiences. "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from *the body of this death?*" Was sin to Paul as real and as loathsome as the chained corpse to the prisoner, dragged about continually with him, as the Apostle may have seen in some Roman prison, and was escape just as impossible?

Yet the Gospel is to tell us how we may be set free. Jesus bears that name, that He may "save His people from their sins." The death burdened prisoner goes on to say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord . . . For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and of death." We used to read when we were children of some knight taken captive by the wicked baron, and shut up in a room of his castle; windows barred, door bolted, chimney fastened down with iron hatches. But the prisoner recollects tales of a secret

passage leading from that very room ; he taps round the wainscot, and finds a hollow panel and secret spring ; a door flies open, and by some subterranean passage he gets quite clear of the castle. Every temptation is like that room. Every avenue may seem closed, but somewhere or other God has made "*the way of escape*" (1 Cor. 10. 13).

Let us be plain and practical, and learn how deliverance is to be had. What would not some give to get it, if they only knew how !

1. Avoid Temptation. "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13. 14). This was the text that helped the great Augustine of Hippo to conquer his besetting sin. It is sheer hypocrisy to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," when our own eyes and ears and legs take us into temptation every day. The man whose temptation is strong drink and who chooses some occupation that brings him into daily contact with it ; the lad tempted to impurity, who listens to vile talk and frequents immoral exhibitions ; the woman with a hasty temper, who gets up so late and arranges her day so badly that she is always in a hurry—these need not expect the grace of God to do for them what they are not in sufficient earnest to do for themselves. Sometimes temptation is connected with some particular person or society. In that case we ought to refuse to have anything to do with such. Some temptations, of course, cannot be avoided ; then "He giveth more grace."

2. Call Sin, Sin. Occasionally, sensitive souls make themselves miserable, like Christian in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, by confusing temptation repelled, which is not sinful, with temptation yielded to, which is. A few are distressed by what may be a question of health rather than of sin ; some ailments, for instance, lead to evil thoughts, or irritable speech, or even public scandal, such as suicide.

Putting these aside, it is essential that one who would conquer besetting sin should call it by its proper name. Sin is almost an obsolete word in the world to-day.

An old Scotch elder once got drunk. The minister went

down to pray with him. The elder began to pray, and he said, "Lord, thou knowest that Thy servant has been overtaken in a very grievous fault." "No, no," said the minister, "*you tell the Lord you got drunk!*" Months afterwards, the incident was all repeated. The elder knelt down and said, "Lord, Thou knowest that Thy servant—has been overtaken—in—in fact, Lord, I got very drunk again, and—" and the tears poured down the old man's face, and he was delivered from that besetting sin!

3. TRUST AND OBEY. Here are two women, both sincerely trying to do right. One is sweet, patient, gentle and loving. The other is bitter of speech, hasty and tyrannical. She says despairingly, "I wish I was like the other, but she has an inborn gracious spirit, and I have not!"

Now it is the very glory of the Gospel that the Lord Jesus can and does supply that very indwelling spirit which is lacking. He was gracious, pure, holy; He will come into our life, and impart of His own Spirit to conquer evil and bring forth good.

That is the only thing that can help us. He gave us good advice; it helps, but we want more than that. He set us a marvellous example; it helps, but we want more than that. We want *power*. And He is the power of God unto salvation. His very name bears witness. He bears the name of Jesus that He may save His people from their sins.

All this power flows from the Cross. We need the Cross to conquer besetting sin. "Knowing this, that our old man (that is, in modern speech, our natural disposition) is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (or sterilized), that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6. 6., see also 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11). To claim His power, we need, first, *trust*—trust in His Atonement, and trust in the present day fulfilment of His promise of deliverance.

Someone says, "But I have prayed and prayed, and it does not do any good in spite of all my struggles." Yes, but the Lord is to be *obeyed*, if He is to give us the deliverance: not obeyed only at the moment of temptation, but with a continual obedience (John 15. 10).

Here is a great ocean liner entering a difficult harbour, and a pilot offers his services. "Yes, follow near," says the liner, "and if we are getting on rocks, we will send for you." The pilot will refuse service on those terms. "Well, come aboard, and go and sit down below. I will take the helm," says the captain, "but if I think I am near a mud bank, I will hand it over to you." Again the pilot refuses service. He asks to have the helm *all the time*. Many want to keep the helm of their lives themselves, but to look to Christ for "emergency grace." He must have the helm all the time. Then deliverance is as sure as the Gospels. There may be stumbling and backsliding, victory may not come all at once, but we shall at length be more than conquerors through our Lord Jesus Christ.

REFERENCES.

The following passages of Scripture may be consulted in addition to those mentioned already:—

1. *We have all sinned.*—John 3. 18, 36; 16. 9; Rom. 3. 9, 10, 11, 12, 23; 5. 12; 11. 32; Gal. 3. 11, 22; James 3. 2; 1 Peter 2. 25; 1 John 1. 8; 5. 19.

2. *On judgment and everlasting punishment.* Matt. 18. 8; 25. 31-46 (see vrs. 41, 46); Mark 9. 48; Luke 16. 19-31; 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9; Heb. 10. 27; Rev. 20. 10-15. The Greek word translated "everlasting" or "for ever and ever" is the same as that used in 2 Peter 3. 18, and similar passages. It is the same in both clauses of Matthew 25. 46.*

3. *On Christ's death in our room and stead.* Matt. 26. 28; Luke 22. 20; John 6. 51: 10. 15: 11. 50; Acts 20. 28; Rom. 3. 25: 4. 25: 5. 6; 1 Cor. 15. 3; Heb. 9. 13, 14, 28: 10. 12; 1 Peter 3. 18.

4. *On the way of salvation.* Matt. 18. 3; Luke 14. 27, 33; John 3. 3, 16, 18; 5. 24; Acts 2. 38: 3. 19: 16. 31.

*See Sir Robert Anderson's book, *Human Destiny; or, After Death—What?*" New edition issued at 1/ (post free, 1/3).

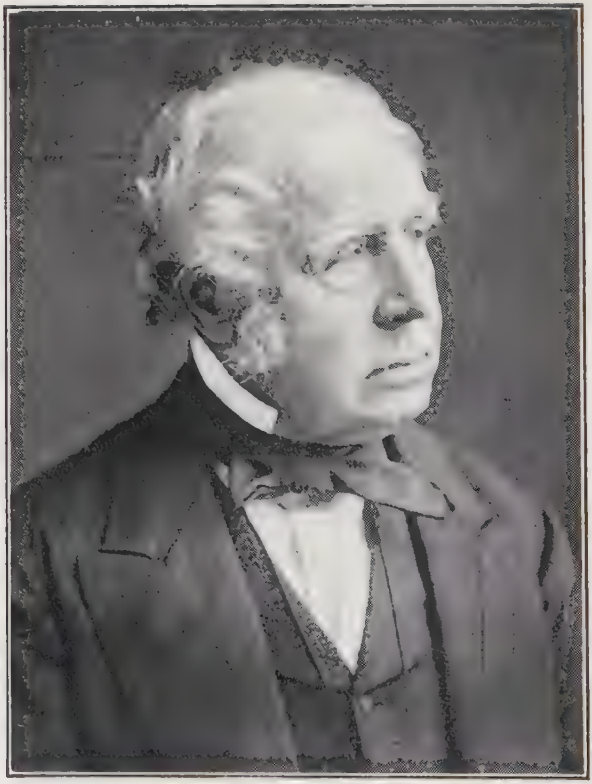
CHAPTER V.

The Principles of Open Brethren.

MARY Queen of Scots said to John Knox, "Which shall I obey then, you or the Pope of Rome?" Knox answered, "Neither, madame; ye shall obey God as He speaks in His Word, for the Holy Spirit is never contrarious unto Himself."

Had Mary Queen of Scots been living to-day, she would have found a far greater variety of claimants for her obedience than John Knox and the Pope of Rome. Her problem was comparatively simple. To-day there are some hundreds of species of professing Christians amongst whom to choose, and it is no matter for surprise that men and women who are not in the habit of taking their faith very seriously imagine that it does not signify much what they believe or whom they join. One who is in real earnest will not argue so loosely. The directors of a modern business house, faced with severe competition, and the leaders of a political party in a trying situation do not think that their beliefs, actions and alliances are of no great importance, because they stand or fall by the issues of their decisions. Most of the easy-minded religious tolerance of the day springs not from Christian charity (which is as scarce as ever it was) but from an irreligious assumption that the will of God does not count for much in our destiny.

In order to pick our way amongst the complexities of the present situation, it is useful to glance in the briefest fashion possible at some main outlines of Church history. During the first century, Christian worship was very simple. There was no elaborate form of ritual; the buildings were far from ornate; the leaders of the various



SIR EDWARD DENNY.

meetings were just chosen from amongst themselves by the Apostles or their delegates, and later by the local assembly. The word " bishop " merely meant a more gifted member of the little congregation who was entrusted with oversight, and his office was the same as that of an elder. If he gave his whole time to the work he was supported by voluntary gifts. The only ordinances were the Lord's Supper and the baptism of believers. The meetings of the church were open for any to take part who were led of the Holy Spirit, subject to the judgment of those who sat by.

Before long, various elaborations crept in. Opinion has always differed as to whether these changes were really due to the further unfolding of the mind of the Lord, or whether as we believe, they tended to make the word of God of none effect by human addition and tradition. The elder or bishop began to take full control of the meetings, of church discipline, and of all church service and doctrine. He was " ordained " by the other bishops in the neighbourhood, and a distinction grew up between clergy and laity, the latter being excluded from teaching and preaching. Before long, as his duties multiplied, he had to be paid a regular salary, which in those early days was scanty enough. Then, through a misunderstanding of the Lord's words, the presiding bishop claimed the power of turning bread and wine into the literal body and blood of Christ.

During the centuries of persecution, it was right and natural that great honour should be paid to the memory of the martyrs, but unhappily they were gradually elevated into the position of demigods and saints, and relics became highly prized for their supposed miraculous power.

Infant baptism was introduced in the second or third century, but did not become the rule till the fourth or fifth, as we shall see.

When the power of Paganism was finally broken, and persecution gave way to prosperity, evils came in with a flood. The outward, visible Church made all sorts of concessions to captivate the people, adopting heathen festivals and heathen gods, and giving them Christian names. The statue of Peter at Rome was originally Jupiter! A Venus or a Minerva readily became the

Virgin Mary. What the worship lacked in spiritual reality it sought to make up in music, ceremony, and spectacular display.

We need not continue the miserable story of how a succession of Popes, sometimes murderers, adulterers and money lovers, claimed absolute infallibility, took the Bible out of the hands of the people, and made conformity to a church which worshipped images in the place of God the supreme test of salvation.

Great, daring and holy men, such as Savonarola, Wycliffe, Luther and Tyndale revolted against the wicked system, and the Protestant churches were the result. In England the movement crystallised into the Anglican or Established Church, although from the days of Elizabeth there were always dissenters, the Puritans, the ancestors of those who are now called Independents and Baptists.

After the long religious apathy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the dissenters sank into Unitarianism and the Church of England into empty formalism, the Wesleys, Whitefield and others led a gracious reviving of evangelical power, and from this sprang the various divisions of Methodism. Thus to-day we are confronted with scores of sects.

Now, if we want to obtain a sample of pure water from the Thames, we must not take it below London, or Reading; we must go up above the first human habitation that defiles it, to the very springs in the Cotswolds themselves. It should be self-evident that if the Roman and Greek churches, to all outward seeming the lineal descendants of the Apostles, were full of corruption, then *the only way to obtain a pure worship would be to go back, not to the fourth century, or even the second, but to the Church of the New Testament for our pattern.* If we find that we must reject *most* of the ordinances which are human inventions, why not be logical, and reject all? Just here the Anglicans and the dissenters alike stopped short. They were content to lop off gross abuses, but they used their own various judgment as to which of the additions they would keep, and which let go. The result could only be a multitude of sects. Some retained the Romish system of Church

government and the liturgical service. Others abandoned both, but kept infant baptism. Others rejected this also but maintained an ordained ministry to lead in worship. One or two sects went to the other extreme and abandoned all ordinances, even the Lord's Supper. It was left for those called Brethren to take up the logical position, namely, that of planning Christian worship and service as exactly as possible on the model of the Church of the New Testament, and rejecting not *some* of the practices which human judgment had added during the centuries, but *all*.

Recently a young minister came to take charge of a church in a village where there was a little company of God's children cared for by an aged brother. The young minister was nothing if not "modern." He expressed himself plainly about the teacher at the little meeting. "That old man," he said to some of the attendants, "wants to take us all back three hundred years." The remark was reported to the old man in question. "No, no," he replied, "more than three hundred years. Nineteen hundred."

A good many churches are no doubt under the impression that they also go back nineteen hundred years in teaching and practice. If so, let them pay special attention to the questions of the conduct of the worship meeting, of church government, and of fellowship with other professing Christians to see if their claim can be substantiated.

It has been objected again and again that we should not jump to the conclusion that the methods of the early church were intended to be binding for all time. Some have remarked that they were the institution, not of Christ Himself, but of the Apostles, and that even in the New Testament there is evidence of variation in practice.

If by this it is meant that the New Testament order itself is a mere human institution, we most energetically protest. The Apostles, as men, were fallible enough, but the model church as described in the Acts and Epistles was planted under the direct supervision of the Holy Spirit, Who also directed what should be put on permanent record for our learning. After the first century the divine

inspiration of human writers, in this sense, passed away. Evidence of this is included in Chapter III.

Nevertheless, there is a grain of truth in the contention that the methods and manners of the early Church are not binding on every generation without some modification in detail. For instance, we do not talk in Greek or Aramaic, we do not wear the garments of that period, our meeting-places are better furnished, we use printed hymn books, and it would no longer be fitting to greet one another with a holy kiss, which in those days was a perfectly natural salutation. We do not feel called upon to make the Lord's Supper part of a meal, as they did, and we do not wash one another's feet.

The essential point is this. When there is no evident spiritual significance in a primitive custom, we need not make ourselves ridiculous by going back to it. But if there can be any spiritual significance, it must be regarded as part of the Divine order, and as such not to be set aside by any human judgment. If we do set it aside, the Lord will say to us as He did to the scribes and Pharisees, "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men . . . making void the word of God by your tradition" (Mark 7. 8, 13). When Paul had been giving directions as to the Church order at Corinth, he went on to say, "If any man thinketh himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are *the commandment of the Lord.*"

Some one may say, "Then are not customs to be changed, even in nineteen hundred years?" What was revealed by the Divine Son of God, and given by the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit to His Apostles, cannot be bettered by the wisdom of men. The law which the Pharisees were rebuked for making void was fifteen hundred years old, but Christ did not excuse them on that ground. Divine laws do not lapse with time, and a new revelation never destroys the old. The faith was "*once for all* delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). To quote John Knox again, "Ye shall obey God as He speaks in His Word, for the Holy Spirit is never contrarious unto Himself."

What, then, we ask, are the apostolic principles of faith

and practice which the Brethren feel it their duty to reinstate? What are the stones in the old broken down altar which they wish to build again?

Some are matters of doctrine, others are matters of practice.

1. We believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ.

2. In the Divine Inspiration and Authority of the Bible.

3. In the primitive Gospel of eternal life only by personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and His Sacrifice in our room and stead.

These are our essential, fundamental doctrines.

4. We practise the baptism of believers only, and that by immersion.

5. We meet around the Lord at His Table on the first day of the week, and at this meeting we allow open ministry to any who appear to be led of the Spirit. The utmost simplicity of form is aimed at.

6. There is no ordained ministry, although a number of brethren give their whole time to the work of oversight or of preaching the Gospel, and are supported, in dependence on the Lord, by gifts. They have no stated salary. The spiritual leaders of a meeting are not elected by vote, but when God manifestly equips them they are recognised by their brethren.

7. Like the Apostolic Church, we welcome at the Lord's table all believers who are sound in the fundamental principles of the faith and godly in life, but we do not receive those of whom this cannot be said.

We have to be prepared for the taunt of being Pharisaical enough in carrying out to the letter the example of the Apostles in matters of outward arrangement and form, but of failing to follow them in evangelical zeal, personal self-sacrifice and Christlikeness of character. Whether this is true it is for the Judgment seat of Christ to declare; we do not profess to be holier, as individuals, than other Christians, but recognise gladly that there are very many amongst ourselves and them who do steadfastly make it their aim to follow His steps, though it be with oft-times wandering and stumbling feet.

Some of the principles just indicated are defended and developed in other chapters, and no more need be said here. We should not regard difference of opinion as to baptism, or the open meeting, or Church government, as any bar to our fellowship, though it might lead us to refuse permission to *teach* in our midst what the majority believed to be unscriptural.

Concerning other points, a few words will suffice. The objections to an ordained ministry are mentioned in Chapter VIII. We do not usually elect elders, pastors or other spiritual leaders because in the New Testament Church they were appointed by apostles or apostolic deputies (Timothy and Titus), and there is no evidence that the Church exercised any choice. The Church was told to *recognise* the God-given ministry of Stephanas and others, to obey those that had the rule over them, and its members had the right to check unprofitable talking (1 Cor. 14. 29, 30), but spiritual ministry is a gift of the Spirit (Eph. 4., 1 Cor. 12.) to be received as such by the assembly without picking and choosing.* We have no apostles, nowadays, nor anyone like Timothy or Titus commissioned by apostolic authority, to appoint our elders and teachers for us.

There is a difference of practice with regard to the setting apart of deacons to look after the financial affairs of the Church ; a few of our meetings elect these by ballot of the members, basing their action on Acts 6, and others make no appointment.

We aim at simplicity in our worship and in our meeting rooms. There is no expenditure on elaborate music, no ornate architecture, and no special vestments. In this we copy the example of the lowly Jesus our Saviour, and the first assemblies of His disciples. Thus there is no

*An attempt has been made to prove that there was an election of elders "by show of hands," in Acts 14. 23, but that is not the meaning of the word in N. T. Greek (see Acts 10. 41), and in any case it says that it was Paul and Barnabas who selected, not the church. The word probably means "to stretch out the hand upon" a person. It is admitted that popular election was resorted to very early (see "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," ch. 15), but the New Testament must be our guide.

temptation to imagine that we are feeding our souls when in reality it is only the artistic sense that is appealed to; we are enabled to save money to be turned to a better purpose, and we avoid the glaring contrast that so often stumbles working men between the honest poverty of the apostles and the splendour of some modern churches. When Thomas Aquinas was taken by Pope Innocent IV. to see the treasures of the Vatican, his guide remarked, "You see the day is gone by when the Church could say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "Yes, holy father," was the reply, "and the day is also gone by when she could say to the paralytic, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.'" Paul declared that even the glories of Sinai, with its volcanic crags and crashing thunder, paled before the glory that excelleth, meaning the preaching of the Gospel in the humble room that joined hard to the synagogue (2 Cor. 3).

A very prominent place is given to the expectation of the near personal return of our Lord for His people. Largely on account of the teaching of early Brethren, the whole Church of God has been more or less awakened to this truth, which was utterly neglected seventy years ago. We are not committed to any particular interpretation of prophecy, but we desire to bear it in mind at all times that in such an hour as *ye think not*, the Son of Man cometh. Whatever view we hold as to the exact significance and order of the various happenings which Scripture foretells are to be associated with the end of the present dispensation, there can be no doubt that human history is rapidly approaching its crisis. We see in the spread of the Gospel throughout the world, the return of the Jews to their own land of Palestine, the crash of monarchies one after another in France, Persia, Turkey, Portugal and China, and the rapid growth of a world-wide federation of socialist democracy incorporating a form of godliness which aims at the deification of man and omits the cardinal principles of the Gospel, sign after sign of those things which usher in the Coming of the Son of Man.

It should be pointed out in conclusion, that although for convenience sake we have spoken of the principles of

" Open Brethren," this title is none of our seeking. It is a mere nickname. We were not a sect originally, and if we claim all true Christians of every denomination as our brethren, we are not a sect now. Sectarianism begins with exclusion.

REFERENCES.

An official schedule of the doctrines and practices of open Brethren, with references to the most important Scriptures bearing on each point, is printed in "*The Western Counties and South Wales Evangelization Trust,*" 1904.* In this the list of doctrines is given in considerably greater detail than we have attempted here. It is, with a little modification, the declaration of faith of the Evangelical Alliance.

An account of the development of human tradition in the early church may be found in Backhouse and Tylor's *Early Church History* and *Witnesses for Christ,* which are particularly interesting in that they are written from the Quaker point of view, which in some respects resembles our own.

Kelly's *Six Lectures on the Church of God,* by a leading teacher amongst the Exclusives, has been described as the clearest manifesto of the principles of Brethren. The Lectures deal particularly with the questions of ministry and office amongst those who have " gathered unto the Name of the Lord out of the ruins of Christendom."

*Appendix II.

CHAPTER VI.

The History of Open Brethren.†

THE principles outlined in the previous chapter are not newly discovered. They have been observed by companies of Christians, with some interruptions, for nearly nineteen hundred years.

We believe that we have a particular right to claim the Church of the Apostles as the first of those who are now called Brethren, seeing that the latter have copied more closely than other bodies of Christians the primitive Church order and worship, fellowship and doctrine. This is not idle boasting ; it is the essence of our position. We will not reiterate here what is said in other chapters in support of this.

Our picture of the early Church is derived, of course, from a comparative study of the Acts and the Epistles. When Justin Martyr and Pliny wrote, early in the second century, a new order of Church government and regulation of worship was already creeping in ; for instance, a president was establishing himself in the congregation. The earlier Christian writings do not go into much detail in these matters, except the so-called Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, which gives a faithful picture of the little companies of believers as they existed at the end of the first century. It does not add much to our knowledge as to their procedure, although it is naturally of very great interest and value.* Nevertheless, we should not feel that it would be by itself a safe guide to follow, because we believe that those parts of the practice of the Apostolic Church which it is our duty to carry out are preserved for

*It may be found translated *in extenso* in Backhouse and Tylor's *Early Church History.*

†See also Appendix for further details.

us in the inspired New Testament writings. Our path is doubly safeguarded; the principles were first imposed upon the disciples by the Holy Spirit, and then described in writing for our learning by the same Spirit.

When all this simplicity was covered over with human additions, more or less conformed to the pagan customs of the age, the chain of witnesses became broken. Some of the early "heretics," as they were called by the triumphant party, who were therefore the "orthodox," made earnest efforts to restore the old order, and to put their trust in the direct guidance of God in worship.

There is no doubt that many of the Montanists, of the second and third centuries, were sincere believers trying to return to first principles. Amongst their number was the great Tertullian of Carthage.

PETER DE BRUYS.

When Romanism was at the summit of its power, before Luther had so rudely shaken it, a sect appeared in France with which we ought to be proud to own affinity. The leader was Peter de Bruys, a man of high character and holy life, who lived at Embrun in France in the twelfth century. He and his followers protested vigorously against the claims of the Romish priesthood, the doctrines of transubstantiation and of masses for the dead. In these respects he was but the forerunner of Protestants in general. But Peter de Bruys had read his Bible still more closely, and had obtained light to see, in the midst of absolutely universal opposition, and in spite of his own previous training, that every place where God is worshipped is a holy place, apart from ceremonial or consecration; he also denied baptism to infants and allowed it only to believers. It is extraordinary to find such light and such a character amidst surroundings so hostile; it gives one cause to admire the illuminating power of the Spirit upon a willing mind. Of course such opinions led to a fire of persecution, but he won many converts, and indirectly our own Wycliffe owed a good deal to him.

THE MENNONITES.

We must speak in more detail of the Mennonites, partly because we have more information, but partly because their meetings have been a valuable help to our missionary brethren in southern Russia and Russian Asia. They had their origin in Zurich in 1523, but Simon Menno, who was born in 1492 and died in 1559, spent most of his life in Holland. He was led to study the New Testament with his eyes open by reading a tract of Luther's. He was a simple, sincere, earnest man, of holy life and blameless reputation, much persecuted for righteousness' sake. He did not actually found the sect which bears his name, although he joined their company ; he refused to countenance any sect, but described himself simply as a servant of the Lord. Everything must be brought to the test of Scripture. He rejected all terms, such as " the Trinity," which are not found in Scripture—he believed, of course, in the *doctrine* of the Trinity. He and his followers acknowledged no authority of priest or minister outside the Scriptures ; they chose " exhorters " from amongst themselves to take part in their meetings. They practised baptism of believers only. This, and their uncompromising opinion that the kings and emperors of this world were to be obeyed as a *civil* but not as a *Christian* power, made them very unpopular even with Protestants such as Luther, and they suffered immense hardships and deprivations. In mockery of their baptist opinions, drowning was their usual fate. Another feature of their teaching which got them, like the early members of the Society of Friends, into much difficulty, was their refusal to take an oath, or to engage in military service.

In spite of all attempts to stamp them out, the Mennonites have survived to the present day, and are scattered widely. In 1903 they were estimated at 250,000. Of these, the majority are settled in little communities over South Germany and Russia, into which latter country they were invited by Catherine II. in 1786. They are a poor, peaceful, secluded folk, and until lately have not been evangelists to the people amongst whom their lot

has been cast. Some years back, many of them, in obedience to a misinterpretation of prophecy, spread over Turkestan towards Tibet, and Mr. Broadbent and other Brethren visiting them have been able to encourage them to become real missionaries to the Moslem and other peoples around them. There are a number of Mennonites in America.

It is a very remarkable phenomenon that such a poor, despised sect, with few leaders of any note, should have preserved their independence and their faith in a good deal of purity, even if it became rather stagnant, through well nigh four hundred years, over Europe, Asia and America.

THE HALDANES.

There are two more heroic figures that deserve a glance before we turn to Dublin and the commonly accepted origin of our existing assemblies. These are Robert Haldane and his brother James.

Robert Haldane was a captain in the Royal Navy, who had been converted, not by pulpit preaching, but in consequence of conversations with a journeyman mason. James was also in the Navy, and was led to the Lord by reading the Bible on board his own ship, the *Melville Castle*. They were wealthy men, and it was Robert's original intention to sell his estate at Airthrie, near Stirling, and to devote the proceeds, amounting to £35,000, to establishing themselves and other helpers in missionary work in Benares. This part of the scheme was frustrated by the British authorities in India. The Haldanes therefore turned their attention to the spiritual state of their own country, which was languishing exceedingly under the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. This was in 1797, long before the days of Chalmers and the great secession of 1843. With a few friends, they commenced to tour the country preaching the Gospel, as Wesley and Whitefield had done before them in England. It is hard for us to conceive what a commotion resulted. Scotland had practically never heard the Gospel from a layman.

The ancient Scriptural order, that *all* disciples should make it known, was completely forgotten. To preach was the province solely of the "ministers," and these were almost all Unitarians with no knowledge of the way of salvation. Lay preaching in Great Britain to all intents and purposes started with the Haldanes, although the early Methodists were just beginning to recognise it. Naturally, the ecclesiastical authorities did their utmost to check the movement. Some of the preachers were mobbed, they were forbidden nearly all the pulpits, and one of them was seized by the press-gang. In spite of this, thousands of persons were converted up and down the whole country.

At first the companies of believers were encouraged to remain in their old Churches, but when these would have none of them, meeting-places were built after the Congregational pattern. The brothers owed much to Dr. Bogue, a leading Congregationalist and a founder of the London Missionary Society. Further Bible study however led the Haldanes to see that infant baptism was not according to the Scriptures, and they also found out that the worship meeting and the Breaking of Bread should be occasions when the Spirit might have liberty to minister by whom He would. They adopted to the full the principle that Christian church life, as well as private life, ought to be modelled as exactly as possible on the New Testament pattern. Thus their teaching and practice became almost exactly that of the Open Brethren at the present day. They also became our forerunners in recognising that the Christian, like his Master, has nothing to do with political weapons.

Unhappily, the great majority of their fellow-workers and converts remained with the Congregationalists, and there was a time of keen controversy and distress, leading to a good deal of interruption of the evangelistic work. The brothers became outcasts from the Churches they had founded by their preaching and maintained by their generosity.

James Haldane continued to preach in Edinburgh and elsewhere for many years. He died in 1851.

Robert Haldane went to Geneva, where there was a theological college presided over by Arians, Unitarians, and moralists, who had effectually banished the gospel Calvin preached from the great Reformer's own pulpit. Here the visitor was blessed in a remarkable way to the divinity students. His readings of the Epistle to the Romans were used to open their eyes, and many of them began to preach a live gospel again. Bitter persecution arose, and they were expelled from the Genevan pulpits. As usual, however, God raised up a people who desired to hear the Truth, and the Reformed Church was started. Amongst these students thus brought out into the light were a remarkable number of men of very exceptional gifts, as Merle D'Aubigny, the historian of the Reformation, Caesar Malan, the brothers Olivier, Gaussen, the author of *Theopneustia*, perhaps the greatest defence of inspiration ever penned, Pyt, and Charles Rieu.

Not the least of Robert Haldane's great services to the Church was in connection with the British and Foreign Bible Society, which had entered upon a disastrous fellowship with opponents of the Gospel on the Continent, and to conciliate these was binding up the Apocrypha with the Word of God. None were more active in protesting against this, and in restoring the Society to the honoured evangelical tradition which it still enjoys, than Robert Haldane.

About the years 1818-1820, a series of letters were printed concerning their principles and order by "Assemblies of Believers," which show that at that time there were many Churches where an attempt was made to restore New Testament methods as exactly as possible, including the principles of union with all Christians, the baptism of believers, the open meeting, and in some cases the kiss of peace and the washing of feet. There appears to have been a clear preaching of the fundamental doctrines of the faith. About twenty-one towns were represented, mostly in Ireland and the South of Scotland, with a few also in England and America. The meeting at Paisley started in 1795, and there were 174 in fellowship. Most

of the gatherings were smaller, but some larger. The origin and history of these interesting assemblies is only very partially known.

We have dwelt upon these forerunners of those known as Brethren, because it should not be supposed that the light given to the latter and transmitted by them to us was any new revelation. Good and holy men, who studied their Bibles and lived by them, had seen the same light, probably in every generation since the Christian era, although it is only occasionally that history has preserved us any record of them. Naturally, we do not undertake to defend *every* action or doctrine, either of these, or of all who are called Brethren to-day.

EARLY BRETHREN.

The first meeting of these was in Dublin. The name "Plymouth Brethren" is therefore a misnomer. The most prominent names in the original gathering are those of Anthony Norris Groves, John Nelson Darby, J. G. Bellett, John Parnell (afterwards Lord Congleton), and Dr. Cronin. Of these the first two probably exerted the greatest influence in the long run.

Anthony Norris Groves was born in 1795, and became an exceedingly prosperous dentist at Exeter, with a professional income of more than £1,500 a year, before he was thirty. Most of this he gave away, living on the barest minimum. A tract of his on giving, entitled *Christian Devotedness*, made a great impression on many. In 1825 he decided to become a missionary, and entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a non-resident student, to train for ordination in the Church of England. At this time he was, as he calls himself, a "high churchman." During his visits to Dublin, he chanced to meet J. G. Bellett, another churchman, a deeply spiritual man. These and a few other friends used to hold little informal Bible-readings together, and after a while Groves suggested that they should copy the primitive Christians by breaking bread every Lord's Day, which they commenced to do whilst still maintaining their ordinary Church associations.

In 1827, Groves began to doubt whether it was worth his while to obtain ordination, and on the Sunday night before he went over to Dublin to matriculate, burglars broke into his house and carried off £400 which he had put aside for that purpose. This led him to see the hand of the Lord guiding him not to seek ordination. When however he presented himself to the Church Missionary Society as a candidate, he found that they would not allow him to celebrate the Lord's Supper when no minister was near. This was a great blow. As he pondered it, the thought flashed through his mind "*that ordination of any kind to preach the gospel is no requirement of Scripture. To me it was the removal of a mountain.*" He imparted this revelation, which may seem very commonplace to us, but ran totally counter to all the ideas of that day (as the Haldanes had found out), to Bellett, who was equally impressed with it. One day, walking in Lower Pembroke Street, Dublin, Groves remarked to him: "This I doubt not is the mind of God concerning us—we should come together in all simplicity as disciples, not waiting on any pulpit or ministry, but trusting that the Lord could edify us together by ministering as He pleased and saw good from the midst of ourselves." Bellett remarks: "It was the birthplace of my mind, may I so speak, as a Brother."

In 1829, Groves sailed as a missionary for Bagdad, which it took him six months to reach, driving overland from St. Petersburg. He had no guarantee of any support from England. His private means sufficed to pay the initial expenses of the work, but from that time onwards he made known his needs only to the Lord, and in some way or other they were all supplied. It required extraordinary faith to take this course then. Other labourers going out since have been encouraged by his proof of God's faithfulness, and by the experience of the Ashley Down Orphan Houses, the China Inland Mission and other agencies, all of which owed something, directly or indirectly, to his example. Nevertheless, his faith was very severely tried. Bagdad was almost wiped out by plague, inundation, and war, 60,000 dying out of a population of 85,000, and Mrs. Groves was one of the victims.

J. G. DECK.

Reinforcements at length arrived, amongst whom were Lord Congleton, F. W. Newman (the brother of the Cardinal) and Dr. Cronin. These had a terrible journey across the Mediterranean to Aleppo and thence through the desert to Bagdad. The first-named lost his wife, whom he had just married in Aleppo, en route. Again and again it seemed as if they must all perish. On one occasion they were stoned out of a town, and Dr. Cronin left for dead. The mission work in Bagdad, also, proved very barren of results, although a few Armenians and others were converted, and as it was found impossible to reach the few bigoted Mohammedans who survived the disasters, the party eventually moved to India, where the work has continued to this day. Mr. Groves' devotedness and personal character made a very deep impression upon some Army officers and other Christians in India, although, of course, many did not agree with his views as to the conduct of worship.

Meanwhile, from Dublin, the little company of worshippers had extended itself to other towns. The expansion was largely due to the untiring efforts of J. N. DARBY. His was a very remarkable and powerful personality. Born in 1800, he became a high church clergyman in Wicklow, where his intense devotion, ascetism and zeal made a deep impression on the simple country folk, but he lost sympathy with the Church on account of its subservience to the State instead of to the supreme Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. At this time he was introduced by Bellett to the little gatherings in Dublin, and he was led to publish a tract on the nature and unity of the Church, as comprising no one sect, but all true believers who walked in the light. He resigned his curacy in 1828.

START IN DUBLIN.

The formation of a regular meeting was due to the initiative of Mr. Parnell (afterwards Lord Congleton), who hired a cabinetmaker's room in Aungier Street in 1830. He had recently been converted and had met Mr. Bellett in Dublin.

The common bond of fellowship which linked the little company together was their determination to follow particular lines of truth of which three were prominent—

1. The oneness of the Church of God, including in its compass all believers of every denomination, but excluding all who were not truly converted.

2. The completeness and full authority of the Bible to regulate our personal life and church life.

3. The speedy return of the Lord.

It is a very extraordinary phenomenon that the company of believers which commenced with universal communion, which never tired of declaring that the Church of England was too broad (as it included unconverted persons), and dissent was too narrow (as some of the dissenting bodies would not allow any but their own members to have fellowship with them), should have ended, in some sections, by universal excommunication on a scale which has never been equalled in Church history. The Open Brethren desire to maintain the principles which first gathered the believers together in Aungier Street.

It was mainly owing to Mr. Darby's influence that these principles spread far and wide, and that an informal fellowship developed, linking together those who held them. He was a man of tremendous force of character and determination, with a most uncommon power of influencing the minds of others, not only of weaklings, but of strong men and learned theologians. He was a deep student of the Word, and read scarcely anything else. Possessed of private means, and able to speak fluently in several languages, he was one of those important men who think in terms, not of parishes, but of continents. He travelled everywhere, staying a few months at a time in each place, and either found or founded gatherings of earnest Christians, in many cases the very pick and flower of the Churches, who rejoiced in the truths he had to teach, and in the prospect of returning to the days of the apostles. He extended his labours to Canton Vaud and elsewhere in French Switzerland, where he reaped a very large accession of members amongst the spiritual children and grandchildren of Robert Haldane. Henri Olivier was

one of these. It was naturally thrown up against Mr. Darby that he detached Christians from their own Churches, which was true, but as a matter of fact very many were converted under his ministry. The power of his preaching and the freshness and comprehensiveness of his teaching can scarcely be gauged from his writings, which are often wretchedly composed.

PLYMOUTH AND BRISTOL.

The two most remarkable meetings in England were in Plymouth and in Bristol. Plymouth gradually became a recognised metropolis, and hence the name was applied to the whole movement. There a number of leading men were assembled. Amongst these were B. W. Newton, Capt. Percy Hall, and J. L. Harris, who had been a curate at Plymstock, and was afterwards the editor of the periodical brought out by the Brethren, *The Christian Witness*. Newton was a Fellow at Oxford University, and a most capable theologian and Greek scholar, to whom Tregelles committed the editing of the text of the Revelation when his health failed. He had refused ordination on conscientious grounds before he met Mr. Darby. Dr. S. P. Tregelles was in fellowship at the Rawstorne Street* meeting in Camden Town, London. He was not exactly a leader amongst Brethren, being rather a student than a teacher, but his saintly character, profound judgment and immense reputation for scholarship naturally won him a high place. He was born of a Quaker family in 1813 at Falmouth, and joined the Brethren at an early age. With rare consistency, he saw that to recover the original text of the New Testament and the original practice of the Apostolic Church were twin problems, and he gave himself to both. He laid the foundations on which the Greek text underlying the Revised Version was restored. He devoted his whole life, after his twenty-fifth year, to the collation of ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, and eventually brought out, at long intervals, a critical Greek text *drawn entirely from ancient sources*, not attempting as previous editors had done merely to

*Street has been renamed, or district changed.

use ancient materials to patch up the current fourth century text which underlies the Authorized Version. The labour involved was incredible and the expense very great: the noble scholar shattered his health and his finances in doing the Church this service. He was stricken with paralysis, and his work had to be completed by his friend, B. W. Newton. In later years, he was driven out from amongst Brethren by the unhappy strife that arose over Newton's opinions, and joined the Church of England. Unfortunately, Tregelles had to work without some documents of very great antiquity and importance so that his text has its limitations. The Codex Sinaiticus was only discovered late in his life, the Egyptian and Syrian versions were imperfectly known, and he was barely allowed to look at the great Codex Vaticanus, his pockets being searched by the Papal authorities for pen or pencil, and the book snatched out of his hand if he examined it too intently.

BETHESDA, BRISTOL.

The Bristol meeting met in Bethesda chapel, and was led by two very gifted men, Henry Craik and George Muller. Mr. Craik was a saintly man of the most loving and gracious temperament, a powerful preacher, and a profound scholar. He was offered, and declined, the degree of LL.D. of St. Andrew's University. He had been a tutor in the family of A. N. Groves from 1820 to 1828, and owed much to the latter's influence and example. He died in 1866.

It would be an impertinence to tell the story of George Müller's amazing life and work in a single paragraph. His Autobiography is a perfect treasure-store, and has been blessed to untold thousands all over the world. Converted after a course of wrong-doing and wickedness in Germany, he came to England to study under a society with a view to becoming a missionary to the Jews. We cannot tell here how he was led to adopt one by one the principles of the Brethren, nor how he sacrificed all his worldly prospects to follow the light as it came. He married A. N. Groves' sister. In 1832 he came to Bristol from

Teignmouth with H. Craik, and the Bethesda Church was founded with themselves, one brother and four sisters as members, "*without any rules, desiring only to act as the Lord shall be pleased to give us light through His Word.*" At first only baptised Christians were received, but after 1837 they felt it right to open the fellowship to "*all whom Christ has received,*" irrespective of their light in other matters. As at Plymouth and elsewhere there was a recognised Eldership.

George Müller founded the world-famed Orphan Houses, as a testimony to the power of believing prayer, in 1836, and they have continued ever since. From 1875 to 1892 he travelled extensively all over the world to strengthen the hands of God's childern of every name and race. He died in 1898. It would be impossible to calculate the effects of his influence, or rather the influence of the Holy Spirit by his means, upon the men and women of our day, in all sections of the Church, and happily he has left behind him so full an account of the Lord's dealings with him that we can still obtain the blessing.

In the early '40's, the movement which we have been describing bade fair to become one of the most potent forces of the nineteenth century, and no small part of the teaching and practice of evangelical Churches to-day, especially with regard to the expectation of the Lord's return, may be traced back to its influence. Unhappily, in 1848 and the years following, the great Enemy of the Church succeeded in sowing the seeds of a bitter strife which rent brethren asunder, just as a few years before the great movement which resulted from the work of John and Charles Wesley had also been the object of his malignant spite. It is no part of the duty of the present generation to rake over the ashes of that disastrous conflagration ; we let bygones be bygones. Suffice it to say that certain tracts issued by Mr. Newton were judged to contain error concerning the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the question arose whether it was sufficient to exclude from fellowship those who held the erroneous teaching, or whether all who belonged to a gathering where

the error was tolerated were to be put outside the pale, even if they themselves had not embraced it. One party, led by Mr. Darby, took the latter view. Others, in particular the Bethesda Church in which Messrs. Müller and Craik ministered, refused to admit any who were convicted of holding the evil doctrine themselves, but did not exclude those who came from Mr. Newton's meeting. The exclusive party thereupon declined to have any further fellowship with members of the Bethesda Church or others like-minded. The latter soon came to receive the title of Open Brethren.

We need not tell the sad history of the Exclusive party, now divided by personal and doctrinal quarrels into six or seven more or less hostile communions. Some of their best men left their ranks before long to join us. Although feeling ran high for years and embittered many lives, they are still, as Mr. Robert Chapman of Barnstaple would always call them, "our brethren beloved and longed for." Now, happily, there are signs that the new generation is willing, in some quarters at least, to let the strife die with those who took part in it.

"OPEN BRETHREN."

At first, the Open Brethren were few in number. Some great men, however, remained with them, including A. N. Groves and Lord Congleton, who had played a most admirable part as peacemakers. There has been a steady expansion since, both at home and abroad. Gospel work of every description has been kept well to the fore. There are now some six hundred missionaries in other lands, and over fifty giving their whole time to evangelistic preaching in the villages of our own country. It would be very difficult to estimate the number in fellowship in the British Isles. A privately issued list includes more than 1,200 meetings, but it is very incomplete. By a variety of indirect calculations, the total membership for the British Isles may be estimated at rather over 50,000, but the figure is little better than a guess. At a religious census taken by the *Daily News* in 1902, it was

found that the attendance at the morning meetings of Brethren in London was 12,635, of whom 3,126 were children. The attendance at the evening meetings was 18,430. Probably some of these were Exclusive meetings. There are a good many meetings in America and the Colonies, and on the continent of Europe, especially in French Switzerland, the scene of some of Mr. Darby's most successful campaigns.

MISSION WORK.

The principal mission fields are Spain, Italy, British Guiana, certain West India Islands, the Argentine, Central Africa, India, Malayia and China. There are also scattered workers in most of the European countries, in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Algeria, South Africa, Mexico, and various South American Republics. It will be noticed that we do not, like some, neglect the Roman Catholic countries.

INDIA was opened up to us by A. N. Groves and Lord Congleton. The former took out with him Messrs. Bowden and Beer from Barnstaple in 1836, who commenced work in the Godaveri delta, which their children and grandchildren are still carrying on.

In 1838, R. C. Chapman paid a visit to SPAIN with two other brethren from Barnstaple; they were only able to engage in conversational evangelization, as the country was fast closed to the gospel. He went again in 1860 and other years. Many stories are related of his gracious ministry. On one occasion a woman in a public coach, a perfect stranger, turned and said, "As for this gentleman, anyone can see that he is a holy man of God, who will go straight to heaven when he dies!" On some of the very spots where he stood and claimed the land in prayer for the Lord, utterly impossible as it then seemed, there are now preaching halls for the gospel in Spain. The country was opened in 1868, when Mr. C. E. Faithfull went out, and Messrs. H. Payne and A. Fenn followed in 1869; the first two are still alive, and Mr. Payne is busy at work in Barcelona, and is engaged on the revision committee of

the Spanish Bible. Another early worker with a long record of successful service was Mr. Blamire. Messrs. Senington and Wigstone, who are still alive, went out in the same year, 1873. At first the work was largely in schools financed through Mr. George Müller.

ITALY was opened up by her own countrymen. Count Guicciardini, a zealous Catholic, was converted by reading a Bible given to him by a priest, and amidst bitter opposition was able to gather a few saints to break bread secretly in 1846. Many were imprisoned by the ruling Papal authorities, and the Count was banished and his estates confiscated. In the 50's, he met at Teignmouth another political refugee, T. P. Rossetti, who was converted by his means. Before the Italian monarchy triumphed over the Pope, and a free united Italy was proclaimed, they were able to work again in their native country, although they were so accustomed to ill-usage that they used to wear padded clothes to ward off stones hurled at them in the streets! The Count spent freely of what part of his property he recovered in the Lord's service. In 1871, they were able to gather 600 believers to a united Love-Feast, many walking for days to be present. From then till now, there have always been a number of Italian evangelists at work amongst their own people, principally in the north. The Count died in 1886, and Signor Rossetti in 1883.

BRITISH GUIANA has had its share of heroic labourers ever since Mr. Leonard Strong, who went out in 1827 as a clergyman in the Church of England, was led by reading the Bible to abandon his office and £800 a year, to preach and teach in all simplicity amongst the slave population, and not without "signs following." George Müller forwarded gifts to him and to others succeeding him in his labours. After the emancipation of the slaves in 1836, D. French and the brothers Collier went out, and worked for many years. Charles Aveline, a midshipman in the Navy, was another devoted worker. Some of the missionaries, notably Meyer and Gardiner, have left a most extraordinary record behind them. The former endured awful privations in his journeys through the untrodden

forest, preaching to the Indians, living amongst them in the most primitive fashion. For simple faith, devotion and self-sacrifice he and his wife have few equals in missionary annals. He died as he lived, by the river side in the forest, surrounded by his Indian brethren. For many years the assembly at Georgetown was cared for by Mr. John Rymer, who went out in 1879 from Bristol, and at last contracted leprosy from some of those to whom he preached, and died of it in 1907. He found a company of seven in fellowship ; when he left there were 700. Many other names might be mentioned, but space forbids.

Dr. Baedeker, whose remarkable life story was recently published, undertook a remarkable labour of mercy in RUSSIA and SIBERIA. Converted late in life under the preaching of Lord Radstock, he determined to serve his Master by travelling over the frozen steppes of the North to visit convict establishments and to distribute the Word of God to the miserable prisoners, some of whom were suffering for Christ's sake. His loving unselfish grace won their hearts, even when their diverse dialects prevented him from making them understand his message. He died in 1906.

CENTRAL AFRICA was pioneered by Mr. F. S. Arnot, who went out in 1881, led thereto by the call of God brought to him by reading the diaries of Dr. Livingstone, near whose home he spent his boyhood. Surely there are few more fascinating stories of travel, adventure and devotion to be found than Mr. Arnot's diary of his solitary journey through Khama's country and Lewanika's capital, to Bihé and the Garenganze district, which he reached in 1886. He was joined by Mr. C. A. Swan, now of Portugal, and the late Mr. W. Faulknor of Canada, in 1887, and two years later, after a brief stay in England, himself returned with a large party. Several of these laid down their lives almost at once, but others, including Dr. W. Fisher and Messrs. Lane and Crawford have continued at work until this day. There are now about sixty of our brethren and sisters engaged in this particular field, and their labour has been crowned with very great blessing. As Mr. Arnot

sometimes says, "The despised Brethren are the established Church of this part of Central Africa."

Although they belong in a sense to all the Churches, yet both the China Inland Mission and the North Africa Mission owe much to the Brethren. Their founders were in our fellowship, and the example of A. N. Groves and George Müller exerted a very powerful influence in determining their principles.

HOME WORK.

Side by side with the development of the missionary work abroad there has been a growth in interest at home. At first, most of the gifts to labourers were either sent privately, or passed through the hands of George Müller, who, during his lifetime, sent out £261,859 7s. 4d. to aid missionary labour. The "Missionary Echo," now called "Echoes of Service," was started at Bath in 1872, under the editorship of Mr. Henry Groves (son of A. N. Groves) and Dr. Maclean, both now fallen asleep. The contributions in the first year were £162; during recent years they average well over £20,000. This only represents part of the gifts sent abroad, as many still give privately or through other channels. During the past few years, the younger generation in our meetings have shown signs of enlarged sympathy with work in other lands, as is evidenced by the formation of numerous Missionary Study Classes, in whose interests a new paper has just been published entitled, "Links of Help."

The Open Brethren in the British Isles, since the disruption, are like the happy country that has no history. There have been some attempts, natural enough when we remember how many Exclusive Brethren have taken shelter amongst us, to demand more of candidates for fellowship than a simple faith in Christ, acceptance of fundamental principles, and a godly walk, and meetings differ in their interpretation of "fundamental principles," but these attempts have not met with much success. Amongst notable institutions may be mentioned the Devonshire House Conference, attended annually by two

thousand people; and other historic conferences at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dublin, Belfast, Yeovil, and elsewhere. The Leominster Conference, now no more, will always bring to mind the long labours of a very remarkable and gifted sister, Mrs. Yapp, who was well known all over the country. Perhaps we should also mention the Monday night prayer meeting in old Bethesda, Bristol, to which requests from all parts of the world are continually sent in. An extraordinary record might be made of conspicuous answers to prayer offered in that building.

Lord Congleton died in 1883. Mr. Henry Groves, writing his memoir, commenced thus: "He had *eyes* lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his *hand*, the law of truth was written upon his *lips*, the world was behind his *back*, and a crown of gold did hang over his *head*." The striking quotation would apply equally well to very many Brethren of the past fifty years whose names are all but forgotten on earth. It has been eminently characteristic of them that they lived apart from the world and its ways, and that they knew their Bibles from cover to cover. God grant that it may be true of us their descendants!

We have spoken of the past; what of the future, should our Lord defer His coming? All around us, even in Churches that in the past have contended earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, there is a toleration of increasing departure from the truth, which vexes the souls of God's faithful children amongst them. The day must soon come when these in every section of His Church, if they are to be true to New Testament principles, will be impelled to protest against the flood of evils, and to stand together with all who still cleave to the Word of God. A. N. Groves and J. G. Bellett sought to provide fellowship for these, by whatever denominational name they had been called, and a goodly vessel was being constructed. It has been marred in the hands of the Potter, but He can make it again another vessel, as it seems good to Him. In His grace He may unite once more all that sigh and that cry for the evils done in the land, and if those called Open Brethren are willing to

receive everyone whom Christ has received, they may furnish no inconsiderable contribution to that happy fellowship.

HYMNOLOGY.

We conclude this very cursory sketch with a few words about our hymnology, which is very distinctive. Four hymn books appeared previous to 1848. R. C. Chapman of Barnstaple, Sir Edward Denny of Tralee Castle, Co. Kerry, and J. G. Deck, who ministered for a while at Wellington and then went to New Zealand, each brought out a book containing for the most part their own and each other's compositions, with some hymns by Darby, Tregelles, and T. Kelly. The last named, though not united with Brethren, had a somewhat similar history. Being forbidden to preach in the Irish Church on account of his evangelical fervour, he left its communion, and ministered in Dublin and elsewhere. He adopted Baptist principles, and something after the fashion of an open meeting. He died in 1845 at an advanced age.

Robert Chapman's hymns are like himself; sweet, spiritual, and gracious; it is simply because they have been overlooked that they have failed to obtain a world-wide circulation. "No condemnation, O my soul" and "O my Saviour, crucified," are two of the best known; the last is a veritable gem.

Sir Edward Denny wrote a number of hymns dealing with the Second Coming. "To Calvary, Lord, in spirit now" and "What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone" are great favourites amongst us. He was beloved by his Irish tenantry, and it speaks well for his Christian character that he was almost alone amongst landlords in escaping any reduction of rents at the hands of the Land Commissioners.

J. G. Deck was a prolific writer. He had been an officer in the Indian army, where he met A. N. Groves. Amongst his hymns two may be mentioned. "Lord Jesus, are we one with Thee?" is widely sung, and so is "O Lord, when we the path retrace."

The three collections mentioned were largely superseded by a book which drew on them all, called at first "Hymns for the Poor of the Flock," now "Hymns for the Little Flock," edited by G. V. Wigram, Darby's principal lieutenant. This little book is still used by some Exclusive Brethren and others.

Some very valuable hymns have been added since the disruption, especially by Mrs. Frances Bevan, who has translated from the German, and by J. Withy, of Bristol. One of Mrs. Bevan's translations expresses the attitude of missionary Brethren very powerfully:—

"Christ, the Son of God, hath sent me
Through the midnight lands;
Mine the mighty ordination
Of the piercéd hands."

There are a number of hymn books still in current use amongst us. In the North, "The Believer's Hymn Book" is employed by many. Mr. Russell Hurditch compiled "The London Hymn Book," and Mr. Denham Smith, originally a Congregational minister, who was mightily used of God in Ireland in the '60's of last century, published a book called, "Times of Refreshing," which contains many of his own excellent verses, and is extensively used in Ireland and some parts of England.

It is unfortunate that there should be so many collections in current use amongst Open Brethren. The largest and most catholic are "Hymns of Light and Love," compiled for the most part by Dr. Maclean, of Bath; and especially "Hymns for Christian Worship," edited in 1909 in Bristol and London, uniting two former books, one in use in and around Bristol, and the other Scobell's well-known "Hymns with Appendix." It contains very many magnificent hymns to which compilers of all evangelical denominations might well pay attention. The hymnology of the Brethren has never been properly appreciated outside their own circle.

REFERENCES.

I have only mentioned here a few authorities which are reasonably accessible.

Early Church History, by Backhouse and Tylor.

Lives of Robert and James Haldane, by A. Haldane (Kennedy).

Memoir of A. N. Groves, by Mrs. Groves.

Memoir of Lord Congleton, by H. Groves.

History of the Plymouth Brethren, by W. Blair Neatby (Hodder and Stoughton). Written by a hostile critic, but in a very fair and judicial spirit. Much of the book is taken up with a most unprofitable account of personal and doctrinal quarrels outside our present history.

On Sea and Land, by H. W. Case (Morgan and Scott). A brightly written account of travel in British Guiana, giving much information about our missions there, past and present.

Garenganze, by F. S. Arnot (J. E. Hawkins). The wonderful narrative of the pioneer journey.

Garenganze (*West and East*), by F. S. Arnot (Pickering and Inglis). Brings the story down to 1902. Is being revised to date.

Autobiography of George Müller, edited by G. F. Bergin. (Scripture Knowledge Institute, Park Street, Bristol).

CHAPTER VII.

The Baptism of Believers.

OLD and well-worn as are the truths contained in this chapter, the world is full of sincere Christians who find it possible to arrive at quite a different interpretation of the New Testament, or whose respect for the commandments of the Lord is not sufficient to lead them to obey Him in this matter.

We take the Scriptural teaching about Baptism to be as follows:

1. Baptism should be administered to all believers, but to no one else; and therefore not to infants.

2. The mode of Baptism should be by immersion, that is, by going down under the water instead of by sprinkling or pouring.

3. One who received so-called "infant Baptism," and later becomes a believer, should be baptised by immersion.

1. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTISED?

"Repent ye," said Peter to the Jews and Hellenists who gathered around the apostles with consternation on their faces and conviction in their hearts; "Repent ye, and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." "Then they that received His word were baptised" (Acts 2. 38, 41).

It is really impossible to escape the plain meaning of these words. They make it perfectly clear that baptism is a duty, that it is to be the privilege of the believer, and that every one who repented and received the Word should be baptised.

It may be asked, where did Peter get authority to institute such a custom? From the highest possible source. He could point to his warrant in the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them* into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

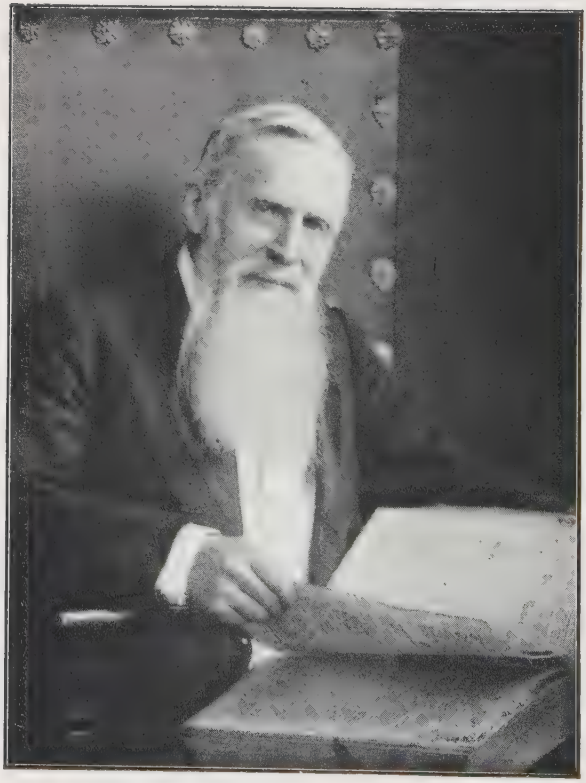
It may be asked, again, whether baptism is not a matter of very secondary importance. It is true that the mere act of immersion is neither essential to salvation, nor a guarantee of salvation. The dying thief was never baptised, but he went straight to Paradise. Simon Magus, in spite of the waters he went under, was still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. But it would be most unscriptural to decide that it does not matter much whether we are baptised or not. The story of the early Church shows what great importance was attached to the privilege. The reader may find for himself evidence that the following believers were baptised: 3000 souls at Pentecost, the converts at Samaria, Cornelius, the eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, Lydia, the jailor, twelve brethren at Ephesus, and the Christians at Rome, Corinth, and Colossae. This long list would not be recorded for our learning, if the matter of baptism was of small importance.

It has been argued by some sects that the rite is of purely Jewish origin and significance. But it is quite clear from the above that Christians who were not Jews were also baptised, and it will not do to attribute this to any supposed Jewish prejudices of the apostles, because Christ Himself commanded them to baptise the converts of all nations.

The next question that arises is whether infants, or only believers should be baptised.

It is begging the question to claim, as some do, that the jailor at Phillippi was baptised, *and his household*, and that since most households contain infants, it must be right to baptise infants! Yet this argument is maintained, in all seriousness, by some of the less responsible of the advocates of infant baptism, forgetting that there are thousands of

* The disciples, not the nations, the gender being masculine, not neuter.



DR. F. W. BAEDEKER.

households in every city where there are no young children. Besides, we are informed quite definitely that the jailor and his household *believed*, and if his children were old enough to believe, they were old enough to be baptised.

The fact is we have no hint or record anywhere in the New Testament, nor in early Church history, that baptism was ever allowed to those who were not already professed believers. Although the 37th verse of Acts 8 was most probably not written by Luke himself, it has great historical importance as showing that the early Church writers who incorporated somebody's marginal comment into the text could not conceive of Philip's baptising any man unless he was a professed believer. The verse, which was already accepted as genuine in the days of Irenaeus (200 A.D.), and is also included by the early Latin versions, thus furnishes a very valuable historical commentary on Church practice in sub-apostolic times. About 200 A.D. Tertullian of Carthage strongly denounced infant baptism, which was just beginning to come into fashion, for the very sensible reason that the child may afterwards give up all his faith when he develops views of his own. The custom did not become general until the fifth century. Neither Chrysostom, Basil, Augustine, Jerome nor Ambrose, who all lived at the end of the fourth century, were baptised until they became believers, although one or both of their parents were Christians.

There are very serious reasons why infants should *not* be baptised. There is a dangerous tendency that one day they may believe that such baptism made them children of God, without leaving any necessity for conversion. It is giving to one who is unconverted the privilege of a believer, and so desecrating it. The early Church,* I believe, rightly interpreted that curious verse in Matthew 7. 6, which speaks of casting pearls before swine, to mean that we must not give spiritual privileges to the unconverted, lest they become despised.

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*See "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" (First Century). The usual explanation, that we must not preach the gospel to exceedingly hardened sinners, is surely incorrect.

The defenders of the doctrine regard Infant Baptism as a sort of consecration of the child to God, and use the Jewish rite of circumcision as an analogy. But the analogy breaks down, because nationality is always inherited, but unfortunately grace is not. It is quite true that Christian parents should gather their friends to dedicate their children to God, but they might just as well tattoo them with the sign of the cross, which would at least be permanent, as sprinkle on them the waters of baptism, because these waters ought to signify death to the old sinful life, burial with Christ, and resurrection to a new life (Rom. 6. 3, 4), symbols which do not apply to the unconscious infant.

Just a word in passing with regard to the proper time for baptism. The Apostles baptised soon after conversion ; we usually wait some months at least. Missionaries who have sought to copy the Apostles in this matter have often been disappointed by wholesale backsliding. It must be remembered that in most cases the early Church had very clear evidence to go upon which we lack, in the visible outpouring of the Spirit upon those who were truly converted, so we are probably justified in most cases in refusing the ordinance until we are sure that there are signs of a genuine change of heart.

2. HOW SHOULD ONE BE BAPTISED ?

The custom of sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion beneath the water has only become common within recent times. Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and even Church historians such as Stanley and Neander allow that the practice of the early Church, as is definitely stated by Tertullian and others, was to immerse. In the only Christian writing besides the books of the New Testament, which has come down to us from the first century, the " Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," it is stated in so many words how baptism was then performed. The passage is curious, and must be taken, of course, merely as an historical statement, not as a Divine command.

" As regards baptism, baptise in this way. Having

taught beforehand all these things, baptise into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost in living (*i.e.* running) water. But if thou hast not living water, baptise in other water ; in warm if thou canst not do it in cold. If thou hast neither, pour the water on the head thrice in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit."

It is quite clear that when baptism is spoken of in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, a going down into the water was meant, as we read in Mark 1. 9, 10, and Acts 8. 38. John would not have needed to baptise in Aenon, near Salim, " because there was much water there," if all he needed was a few drops in a cup !

Unless baptism is by immersion, the significance of the type of being buried with Christ into death, and then raised with Him to walk in newness of life, is spoiled (Rom. 6. 3, 4).

It will probably be objected that literal obedience to this ordinance means a lot of trouble and unpleasantness. One recalls the story of a recent baptising service in Spain, after months of fiery persecution, where the water was fetched a considerable distance by many willing hands, but sad to relate the tub which was to be used for the baptistry was leaky, and the precious water dripped through the floor into the room underneath ! Not to be daunted, the missionary and a helper stayed up all night collecting the droppings in buckets, and taking them up to the tub again ! Delicate, timid folk, men and women, boys and girls, have been baptised before now and are still being baptised in the open air, in the face of a hostile crowd, and sometimes in icy waters. But such brave resolution and fearless witnessing is part of the cross which every follower of Christ with any conviction in his soul must take up sooner or later if he is to be a disciple at all, and shames the apathy of those of us who think we prefer a pleasanter way to that described in the Scriptures.

3. IS RE-BAPTISM EVER NECESSARY ?

Confident as we are that everyone who believes has, and has for ever, eternal life, we do not allow that one who has

been converted and baptised can ever require to be baptised again, however far he may have wandered, provided, of course, that he did actually receive the baptism of a believer, into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

But it is a very different matter, and one which arises frequently in practice, whether a man or woman who was christened in infancy, and years afterwards becomes converted, should then be baptised.

We do not wish, in the absence of absolutely plain Scripture teaching, to criticise those belonging to various Christian denominations, many of them great and holy men and deeply taught in the Word, who see no necessity for re-baptism. But it is our duty, not to copy this good man or that, but to work out in our own lives what the Bible teaches. If it is true that christening has no *locus standi*, no true standing, amongst Christian ordinances, then the sprinkling of the water on our faces in infancy was, as the lawyers say, null and void, and we are virtually unbaptised, so that the word ought to come home to us, "Repent ye, and be baptised, every one of you."

There is a very remarkable little incident which furnishes, I think, a genuine parallel for this situation, recorded in Acts 19. 1-7. Paul found at Ephesus about a dozen men who were disciples, and who had been baptised "into John's baptism." That was of course very right and good, but Paul advised them that now Christ had come, John's baptism was null and void, and they ought to be baptised again into the name of the Lord Jesus. This they agreed to, and the Holy Spirit witnessed the Divine approval. Here is a clear indication that re-baptism may be right and necessary, when the first was the token indeed of a real desire to serve God, but without the full light upon the subject which is brought by a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Worship Meeting.

EVERY meeting, whether for preaching the Gospel, or for prayer, or even for studying foreign missions, may be a worship meeting, but the name is peculiarly applicable to those seasons when we gather together, few or many, to " sit down with the whole Church of God " (as Dr. Baedeker used to write in the diary of his lonely journeys amongst the prisoners of Siberia) to remember the Lord's death in the breaking of bread.

No Christian can doubt that he or she is invited, nay commanded, in tones of the gentlest entreaty, spoken almost as His last message to the disciples before He suffered, to come to the table of the Lord, to *remember* for ourselves, and to *proclaim* to others, something of the amazing significance of the solemn scene when He died for us.

No definite instructions are given as to how often, when, or where we are to break the bread, nor is there much by way of definite commandment to prescribe the exact procedure to be followed. We must learn by intimation. That being so, it is very important that we should endeavour to find out just in what manner the early disciples, guided by the Holy Spirit, obeyed their Lord in this matter. And in so doing, we must try to separate out what has a purely accidental or local significance from what carries with it a spiritual principle.

We find, then, that in early days the ordinance was preceded by a meal. This was so, of course, at the time of its first institution. The little company in the upper room had just been eating the Passover. At Corinth we read that such serious abuses had crept in that at the

Lord's Table one was hungry, and another was drunken, and that everyone took there his own supper. Paul, however, laid down explicit commands that to prevent this in the future, the meal must be eaten at home (1 Cor. 11. 22, 34). This is important, as showing that it was right to alter a custom which had no spiritual significance.

We find, again, that the ordinance might be kept either in private houses (Acts 2. 46) or in a place of public assembly, as at Corinth, or in the upper room at Troas, where Eutychus went to sleep on the window-ledge and fell out. (Apparently even when a Paul was preaching, some of his congregation found him wearisome at times !) The same narrative shows that the apostle judged it right to have suitable addresses on these occasions. We are also told that at Troas the meeting was held on the first day of the week, in the evening. Most probably the collection at Corinth on " the first day of the week " (1 Cor. 16. 2) would be taken at this gathering.

Turning now to matters of more essential importance, we find that the elements to be used were bread and " the cup," containing " the fruit of the vine." It is a noteworthy fact that it nowhere says that the cup contained wine or other fermented liquor. This is of some interest, because it makes it quite clear that the use of unfermented wine, provided it be " the fruit of the vine," is not out of accordance with the letter of Scripture.

The point to which we must now direct special attention is this : was the meeting which accompanied the " Breaking of Bread " open for all to take part, or was the ministry in the hands of a special order, or even of one man ?

No one can deny that it was what we call an " open meeting." It is true that in the times of Justin Martyr and of Pliny (early in the second century) there was already a leader or president, who read and explained the Scriptures. But an attentive study of the four Gospels shows that at the original institution of the feast about half of those present took some audible part, and it will be observed in 1 Corinthians 14, a most important chapter in this connection, that quite a number of the brethren were accustomed to speak or to give out a psalm, and Paul

does not *hinder* this, but seeks to *regulate* it, bringing all to the test of his two comprehensive rules :

Rule 1. " Let all things be done unto edifying."

Rule 2. " Let all things be done decently, and in order."

We are speaking now only of the outward setting of the ordinance, reserving a little space later for its inner significance, and the spirit in which it should be approached.

In seeking to interpret the example of the first century into the practice of the twentieth, we must try to draw a cautious distinction between details that have a spiritual significance, and those which were essentially due to local conditions and without any deeper meaning. The early disciples talked in Greek, their dress and furniture differed from ours ; being mostly slaves they found it easier to meet in the evening and to have a meal together ; they had no hymn books, although fragments of Christian hymns seem to peep out here and there in the epistles ; they greeted one another with a holy kiss, and perhaps washed one another's feet. These were all matters of local custom, and although some have attempted to revive them in part, we are not called upon to do so.

We do not agree, however, that we have a right to judge in the same way of the question of ministry, which undoubtedly *has* a spiritual significance. If a Church wishes to ordain and separate a special class of Christian men from their fellows, and to allow only this special class to speak at the worship meeting or to dispense the bread and wine, they are making a distinction which is not scriptural. We do not doubt for a moment that God has greatly blessed men belonging to the " separated ministry," nor that very many of their hearers gather to meet the Lord Jesus as sincerely as we do, but that does not prove that their position is scriptural.

All believers used to preach the Gospel, in public or in private, and ought still to do so. Philip, who was a deacon, not an apostle, held an evangelistic mission at Samaria. Paul preached without being ordained by any man ; his ordination was from Heaven (Gal. 2. 7, 8). The leaders of the Church gave him the right hand of fellowship, and the

Church at Antioch laid their hands upon him, again in token of fellowship, when he was called to a new work, but that is a very different thing. Even the rank and file of the Church travelled everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 11. 19, 20), and great blessing followed.

Next, we are told that all believers are priests. No one has any right to restrict the word to a special class in Christian times (see Revelation 1. 6; 1 Peter 2. 5, 9). Moreover, gifts are not confined to the few, but are widespread in the Church (1 Cor. 12. 4-31). It is running the risk of quenching the Spirit in the meeting to confine His ministrations to one single channel, which may dry up. Many and many a time there has been a minister in the pulpit giving very poor food to the flock, perhaps withholding some necessary ingredients altogether, and men sitting in the pew to whom God has made a special revelation, but the Church has abolished the old custom of Corinth, so that the first does not hold his peace for the second to speak (1 Cor. 14. 30), nor is there any opportunity for all to prophesy (*i.e.*, speak a message from God) one by one.

We maintain that the only special functions assigned to the twelve apostles which were not accorded to other believers in an equal degree were of a purely personal nature, and such as could not be transmitted. These special functions, for which they were to be chosen out from the rest, were, first, " that they might be with Him " in the Lord's earthly career, and, secondly, that they might be witnesses of His Resurrection (see Mark 3. 14, 15; Acts 1. 22; 1 Cor. 9. 1). It is true that in the first of these passages preaching and casting out devils are mentioned, but in Luke 9 we see that seventy disciples also had these privileges assigned to them. Thirdly, some of the apostles had the power to ordain elders either personally or by deputy, but this power ceased with them. The apostles, therefore, had much to hand on to the whole Church, but nothing to hand on to a so-called " Apostolic Succession," and that theory is devoid of both scriptural and historical foundation. Even in John 20. 22, 23, the prime argument of the Romish hierarchy, there is no

evidence that special power was given to the apostles which others did not share (see Matt. 18. 18).

Let us consider some of the objections to following the example of the first Christians in this matter of ministry. It is claimed that bishops were set apart in the early Church for special work and privileges. This is true. The people were told to esteem them, love them, obey them and support them financially. But it is certain that the primary function of the bishop was to rule, to "take the oversight," not to do all the speaking in the worship meeting. The "bishop" (literally "overseer") and the "elder" mean one and the self-same person (Acts 20. 17, 28, R.V.). They are never spoken of together as distinct, and the qualifications are identical (compare Titus 1. 5-9 with 1 Tim. 3. 1-7). Some of them, evidently, took no part at all in public speaking (1 Tim. 5. 17).

If men go beyond the New Testament orders of overseers and deacons, the first taking administrative duty and the second financial, difficulties arise with all the customary names and titles. The style of "priest" may justly be claimed by all Christians alike; the word Reverend is, in the Bible, only applied to God Himself; the disciples were expressly forbidden to be called Rabbi or Father (Matthew 23. 8-11); and a minister means a servant or attendant (Acts 13. 5).

The principal objection alleged against the Apostolic custom is that it leads to dull, profitless meetings. Perhaps the reader calls up the picture of a poor little room, barely furnished, where a dozen or more men and women of lowly education and humble circumstances meet around the Lord's Table, and some of them are intolerant, and some are tedious, and there is little that is new or interesting or instructive to be learned from their ministry. In the next street is a bright, pretty chapel, with a good organ and fine singing, a crowded congregation, and an eloquent preacher, well-read, earnest, sticking to the old Gospel and the old Bible. Every time one hears him one feels uplifted and helped.

We are painting the contrast in extreme colours. Many of us have found a morning meeting around the Lord's

Table, even in a small company, anything but dull or profitless. Very, very often it has been as clear as possible, except to those who take no real interest in spiritual things as such, that the Lord Himself has drawn near. It is easy to realise His guidance when one after another is led on, in reading, or prayer, or speaking, or giving out a hymn, all blending in a beautiful harmony in the Spirit. But there are some who have no eye for beauty in nature, and others who have no eye for spiritual beauty in a meeting. Such are not found only in the company of Brethren!

On the other hand, what we call "profitable" or "helpful" often means, being interpreted, something new or artistic. The Athenians are still with us. It is not at all easy to learn, it may take us years to find out, that what instructs our minds or touches our emotions, such as wide reading, brilliant thinking, eloquent speaking, beautiful poetry and music, may not be spiritual food; that is, it may not build up our Christian characters. It is sometimes rank poison. Thank God, not always.

When Paul heard what painful meetings they were having at Corinth, he might have said, "Do not listen any longer to all these ignorant people, mostly slaves. Make Stephanas your minister, and let him do it all." No doubt this would have helped very much in some directions, but the Apostle was not prepared to give up the open meeting. It was far too valuable. He did not want to make churches like comets, with a brilliant head and a long nebulous tail. He told them, however, and it is very important to put the injunction into practice, that the assembly was not called upon to listen to everybody who chose to make himself a nuisance, or who talked unprofitably. There were some "whose mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1. 11). The listeners were to be the judges (1 Cor. 14. 27-29). Nor were two to take part at the same time. There was liberty but not licence. It was an open meeting, but there were rules to be observed. It was a meeting open for the Spirit to speak by whom He would, not open for men to say what they pleased.

It may be asked, "But is it not better to sit under the ministry of University graduates who have been trained

to preach, than to have to listen to business men or even uneducated persons?" Paul said, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up." God hath chosen the *poor* of this world, rich in faith. Not many wise, not many noble, are called. He hath hidden things from the wise and prudent that are revealed unto babes. Whilst not underrating the value of good education, wide culture and experience in ministry, and the importance of giving time to prepare for preaching, yet these are quite secondary matters. Grace is not necessarily learned in colleges. I amuse myself sometimes by looking over the examination papers for University degrees in Theology. I should rather think that to answer some of the questions on critical subjects would involve a shipwreck, either of faith in God's Word or of the examination result!

Of course it is usually possible, by running from one popular preacher to another, to get a great deal of what is called "help." But there is more real building-up of spiritual character to be obtained by keeping as closely as we know how to the commandments of the Lord, than by hearing an angel from Heaven preach every Sunday. If we seek to do the Lord's will, He will teach us. We shall probably find it possible to obtain the help of the good and holy men of this and every previous generation without neglecting the humble meeting where the Lord is worshipped in His own appointed fashion. Their books may be read and their voices may be heard on other days than Sunday.

It is not right to regard the character of our worship as a matter of no importance. After laying down clear regulations for the conduct of the open meeting, Paul concludes with these striking words: "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things that I write unto you, that they are *the commandments of the Lord.* But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant." If we read these words in their context, their force is very apparent.

The argument which a serious-minded man, who acknowledges the authority of the apostolic example, is most likely to employ against the open meeting is that

the day of miraculous gifts is over, and that we cannot expect the Holy Spirit to guide a meeting now as He used to during the first century.

No doubt the gifts of healing and of speaking with tongues have passed away. The special gift of inspiration which led Paul and others to write their Epistles has also passed away. But the Holy Spirit has not passed away. He abides with us for ever (John 14. 16); not only with the ordained minister, but with every believer (Rom. 8. 9). It is one of His functions to take of the deep things of God, and to reveal them to us. He spoke at Corinth not only through Apostles but also through obscure slaves. If He cannot speak to-day through the open meeting, which was His own original appointment, if all His ministrations were concluded in the first century, then we must believe that even John Wesley, C. H. Spurgeon, and D. L. Moody preached without His assistance.

The open meeting shifts the responsibility of following the Spirit's leading from the minister to all the believers present, and a solemn but blessed responsibility it is. It comes in some degree even to those who sit in silence. They realise that they are gathered to the Lord, and not to man. It is theirs to occupy each pause, not in wondering who will take part next, but in responding to the gracious invitation of the Spirit, as He calls through hymn or Scripture or the Word ministered, to draw near to Calvary.

An added responsibility lights upon those who can take audible part. They have to learn to be silent or to speak as the Spirit leads. This involves the delicate duty of knowing His voice. It is necessary that they should be students of the Word if they are to minister it profitably. There is a great blessing for those to whom the gift is given. In watering others they are watered themselves most of all.

Let us offer a word to younger brethren on this subject. We have all received some talent or gift. It may not be in this particular direction, of course. But it is not humility, it is unfaithfulness, to bury the talent, and to say, "I have none." It is possible, of course, to take part in a meeting in order to gratify the natural craving for

prominence, but it is also possible to withhold a message from our fellows that God has given us for them, and so to deprive them of blessing and stunt our own growth and fruitfulness. How eager Paul was to impart some spiritual gift! Peter says, "As each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Any such gift within us will not be perfected all at once. It will need stirring up by practice and study. We have no Paul to confer it by laying on his hands, but reading and meditation are still open to us as to Timothy. We as individuals might do more than we have in the past to obtain for ourselves a wider general culture. Church history and Christian biography are full of helpful lessons. The humblest and least educated of us can become wiser than all the sages by diligent, systematic study, note-book in hand, of the Holy Scriptures.

But ministry, however helpful, is not the main purpose of our coming together. We gather to sit at the table of the Lord. Is there not a sweet significance in the very phrase, "the table of the Lord"? Is it not like the scent of roses from a florist's shop wafted to us as we hurry along the crowded city street, recalling, it may be, the old childhood home in the country, the great rose bush in the garden, and its flowers trailing over the porch? Or perhaps it makes us think of the father and mother flinging wide their doors with welcome for the annual re-union at Christmas, and sons and daughters from far and near gathering around the old family table with joy and thankfulness at the sight of their loved ones once again. Do not let us undervalue the Table because we gather round it frequently.

We should have right thoughts of our feast when we come together.* There are some things which it is *not.*

1. *It is not a sacrifice.* There is no ground for looking upon the Table as an altar, upon the one who officiates as a priest, or upon the Bread and Wine as anything but

*I am indebted for these paragraphs to some thoughts expressed by Mr. F. W. Challis, M.A.

symbols. When the Lord Jesus died, He offered one sacrifice for sins for ever (Heb. 9. 12). It is true that He said, "This is My Body," but when He said so, it was obviously symbolical, because His Body was reclining at the table, not yet bruised for our iniquities, or wounded for our transgressions. We do not believe that He was a door, because He said, "I am the Door," nor that He kept literal sheep, because He said, "I am the Good Shepherd."

2. *It is not a charm,* such as a heathen might eat, or carry about with him, to protect or to bless. If partaken of in this expectation, it may prove to bring judgment in its train (1 Cor. 11. 27-31. R.V.).

3. *It is not an ordinary meal.* It was because the Christians at Corinth failed to see its sacred character, that some died, and others were striken down with illness.

The Lord's Table is for *remembrance,* for *communion,* and for *testimony.* As we sit there, we remember a Face set as a flint to go to Jerusalem, mocked and spit upon, crowned with a wreath of thorns, bowed in agony of death, and exalted in resurrection glory. In our solemn remembrance, we have communion—blest comradeship with all the saints, and fellowship with God. How sad that even at that Table, there was, there still is, strife as to who shall be the greatest! And finally, to the world, we proclaim the Lord's death until He come. It bears silent witness that Christ is not a modern myth, and that there are still believing hearts that love Him.

The feast needs to be eaten with these thoughts in mind. There was, and maybe there is, sickness and sorrow and even death for those who partake unworthily. We are told to come, moreover, in a spirit of self-judgment, lest there be anyone who is drinking of the Lord's cup, and the cup of devils. But let us not think that the remedy is to stay away. That will not avert from us the hand of the Lord. The remedy is to judge, to criticise ourselves; then we shall not be judged by Him. And there is mercy even in His chastenings; they are "that we may not be condemned with the world."

CHAPTER IX.

Practical Problems.

"And they found written."—*Nehemiah.*

THE striking example of the Jews as they built up again their old institutions after the return from the Captivity, ought to be a guide for us in all our practical problems. For them, there was only one criterion. "They found written," and therefore, with unquestioning obedience, they carried out what was written in spite of its obvious inconveniences.

The application of the Scriptures to three such practical problems is considered here:

1. Missionary problems.
2. Problems of politics.
3. Problems of fellowship.

1. MISSIONARY PROBLEMS.

We have already seen how Anthony Norris Groves, who occupies such an important place in the early chapters of the history of the Brethren, was led to go out into the foreign field in simple dependence on the Lord for all financial and other supplies, with no society or organization to guarantee him any support. At much the same time, George Müller severed his connection with a missionary society to Jews, because he did not feel at liberty to make his Christian service subject to the control of a committee. He felt that his responsibility was directly to the Lord and not to men, and when men guarantee financial support, they naturally claim to exercise control of the missionary's spiritual activities. These principles have guided our missionary policy ever since. Our workers

go out without any promise of support from men ; they make their needs known only to God, and they are supplied. Thus they are thoroughly independent to go where they believe He sends them, and to do what they believe He teaches them. Being bought with a price, they refuse to become bond-servants of men (1 Cor. 7. 23).

It is true that a few brethren at Bath and elsewhere give themselves to the task of publishing information in the form of letters from these workers,* and they also receive and forward gifts that may be entrusted to them, without any deduction for office expenses, but this implies neither guarantee nor control. There are also those amongst us who seek to advise, prepare, and train candidates in waiting, and, naturally, missionaries already on the field are always glad to help the prospective worker.

From a business point of view, all this looks quixotic to the last degree, and the man of the world will expect to hear that our missionaries are few and far between, that they often starve, and that their efforts are scattered or overlapping and disjointed. As a matter of fact, there are over six hundred of them ; in years when new workers cannot be sent out by the great societies, on account of lack of supplies, God has graciously thrust forth many from our midst. In a large tract of Central Africa, in British Guiana, Argentina, some West India Islands, the Godaveri and other districts of India, in Italy, Spain and Portugal, those who have gone out from our midst form a very large proportion of the evangelical missionaries ; indeed, they often constitute the whole force in a large district. This is not said in any spirit of boasting. We know and recognise the immense labours of others and honour them for it, but we cannot allow it to pass unchallenged that copying the example of the apostles has led to failure or disaster. We will not leave their example by trying to count converts, but there are many native churches founded by brethren with fifty in fellowship, and some running into hundreds.

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* "Echoes of Service," 1d. fortnightly, 1 Widcombe Crescent, Bath.

GEORGE FREDERIC BERGIN.

The success of foreign mission work does not depend on business methods, nor even on the number and intelligence of the workers maintained in a given district ; it is exactly related to spiritual power. Spiritual power is only obtained by following spiritual methods. A real outpouring of the Spirit accomplishes far more in a few weeks than diligent teaching and preaching can do in as many years ; it comes here and there mysteriously, but only where there are spiritual men and women working on spiritual lines. We stake everything on the divine factor.

We can only be sure of following spiritual lines when we copy as closely as possible the pattern which is " found written " in the New Testament. It is easiest to trace in the missionary labours of the Apostle Paul. A study of the Acts and Epistles will show us that he was not sent out, controlled, or supported by any responsible body of Christians ; that his needs were met partly by his own labour and partly by the contributions of his friends at Philippi and elsewhere, while other labourers—quite scripturally, as Paul himself allows—were supported entirely by such gifts. There is a very practical difficulty, quite apart from the apostolic example, in appointing a committee to guarantee a missionary a salary. What are they to do if the money does not come in ? We believe that it is unscriptural to go into debt (Rom. 13. 8), yet this becomes almost inevitable under such circumstances.

It must not be imagined, however, that the Christians who remain at home have no responsibility to those who go out. In the pattern in the Acts, the Church at Antioch took full responsibility for them, in praying and fasting and laying hands upon them and sending them away. Those who go out to foreign fields with the Gospel are doing our work, and our earnest prayer, sympathy and support are demanded to fulfil our share of our own responsibility to the heathen to whom they go in our stead.

How to lead the Christians at home, and especially the young people in our meetings upon whom the future of the work must devolve, to realise and fulfil their responsibility is a missionary problem of another sort. The establishment of so many Missionary Study Classes

in various places, and the frequency of helpful Missionary conferences, are encouraging signs that this problem is not altogether neglected amongst us.

What has been said as to the control and support of workers in other lands holds true for the considerable number who gave their whole time to evangelizing needy villages in the British Isles, and also for a few cases in which in a large assembly or groups of assemblies, a brother may give his whole time to pastoral work and preaching. Instances of this are rather exceptional in our meetings, but they are quite consistent with our principles if there is liberty for others to take part in the worship meeting, and the brother does not claim any special spiritual functions denied to his brethren. It is a divine ordinance that he who preaches the gospel should live of the gospel.

2. PROBLEMS OF POLITICS.

The first century was full of political and social problems. Judaea was in a state of chronic insurrection against the Roman suzerainty. The Herodians, the courtiers at the little provincial courts, aping the manners and style of the conquerors, were at continual strife with the patriotic party, the Pharisees. The common people were scorned and despised by both, the prey of tax-gatherers and impostors.

Outside Judaea there were problems. The Jews, scattered all over the civilised world, were liable to the most abominable treatment everywhere. Half Rome and Italy consisted of slaves; these were the absolute property of their masters; and could be tortured to death for no provocation, without the least redress. Every now and then they rose in rebellion, only to be crushed down by awful cruelties. Then there were moral problems. The rank, disgusting, sensual immoralities that clustered under the mantle of Oriental religions were slowly eating the heart of the old time purity and noble manhood of Greece and Rome.

There were social problems. The most hopeless starvation, relieved only by occasional State doles, groaned side

by side with the most wanton luxury; with feasts composed of a thousand nightingales' tongues and of delicacies brought in at fabulous cost from every corner of the earth; it was the age when ladies dissolved priceless pearls in vinegar and drank them for sheer display.

What was the attitude of our Lord and His Apostles to these gross and crying evils?

It is very surprising to read the New Testament to seek for an answer to this question. One would have expected ceaseless denunciation and urgent effort to right matters. There is, truly, a fearless and outspoken indictment of all forms of moral evil. But of political energies, of taking of sides, of appeals to rulers, of attempts to raise the popular indignation against abuses, we find not a trace. Christ and the Apostles denounced the luxuries of the individual rich, but said nothing to fan a class war. They did not actively interfere with the miserable system of slavery. They did not try to protect persecuted Jews in the law-courts. When the Pharisees cried against Jesus that He stirred up the people and forbade to give tribute to Caesar and made Himself a king, their real objection to Him was that He would *not* do these very things and become a political agitator, and lead the nation against the Romans.

There is a striking instance of this policy of non-interference in the incident of John the Baptist. He was unjustly imprisoned in a miserable, cramped dungeon, and in daily danger of his life. He was Christ's own kinsman, and had been His forerunner. Yet amongst all His mighty acts, He could not spare one to rend the prison walls, and no angel went in to deliver John as he did when Peter was the captive. We do not read that the Lord even sent a petition to Herod for his release.

On questions of personal morality, of course, such as marriage and divorce, Christ spoke plainly enough, even when His earthly sovereign was a notorious offender. The fact is, that Christ and the Apostles did not desire to work through political parties. They proposed to bring blessing to the world by the method of individual regeneration, not by what we now call Act of Parliament. It is a

slow method, but it is the only sure one; it remedies not only the evils that lie on the surface, but the deep-seated evils of the heart.

The majority of Brethren, seeking to follow His steps, refuse to ally themselves to any political party, and have incurred much reproach by so doing. "No help," writes a leading Free Church minister, now in the House of Commons, "can be counted upon from Plymouth Brethren in any of the great national controversies for liberty and legislative right." No one denies, of course, that Christian men like William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury exercised an extraordinary influence for good in English politics, but Wilberforce was already a politician and in Parliament before he was converted, and it was only after much heart-searching that he decided that it was right for him to abide in the calling wherein he was called. Lord Shaftesbury, again, was a legislator by his birth. Lord Congleton, one of the original leaders of the Brethren, eventually took his seat in the House of Lords, occupying the cross benches, and lending his support to some of Lord Shaftesbury's religious and philanthropic undertakings, but he only did so because his place there was not of his own choosing, but came by the disposition of God.

The pitiful history of the past few years, when true Christian men in the Church of England and their brethren amongst the Nonconformists have been fighting one another about the education of the children with such unrelenting bitterness that there is serious fear that the Bible will be withdrawn from the schools altogether, illustrates the dangers that beset the Christian politician.

Opinion will differ, of course, as to how far non-interference should go. Few, if any, Brethren speak on political platforms; a fair number use their vote, but probably the majority abstain.

The same principles hold good when industrial strife comes under consideration. It is exceedingly difficult in these days, often quite impossible, to keep out of it altogether, but if he would copy what is "found written" every Christian must strive to be amongst the peacemakers.

3. PROBLEMS OF FELLOWSHIP.

1. WHY SHOULD I JOIN A CHURCH? There are so many Churches, all agreeing in many important particulars, all differing in smaller matters; there is much that is good in all of them. Why not go from place to place, wherever I may expect to find an interesting service or a helpful preacher; why throw in my lot with one in particular? Should I not by joining one Church find a good deal to put up with in the way of uninteresting ministry at times, also perhaps some internal friction, and should I not also lose the benefit of the ministry in other Churches? This is a real problem to many young Christians.

In seeking for the right answer, we need to ask first of all, whether it is more blessed to give, or to receive. It is a form of selfishness that tempts one to try to receive from all the Churches, giving them nothing but a few pence in the collecting basket. A member can give a Church far more than a casual visitor, not only money but other things more valuable, prayer, influence, work, and sympathy.

Again, there will come a time in our lives when we shall need Christian help and shepherding. It may be in bereavement or sickness, in poverty, or alas, in backsliding. We are far more likely to obtain these, at a moment which may be very critical for spiritual life, if we are in fellowship with a few of those whom God has given to be pastors of some little flock, to watch for souls as those that must give account. It is only when one has seen promising young lives wrecked for want of this timely shepherding, that one begins to realise the grace of God in setting the solitary in families, and the folly of shutting oneself out from His provision. Almost every reader who has not yet attained his twenty-first birthday will probably under-estimate the importance of this reason for joining a Church.

Thirdly, we all admit that it is our duty to obey the Lord in everything. Therefore it is our duty to remember Him in the Breaking of Bread. Some reader may say, "Well, I can do that without joining a Church." Yes,

but *do* you? It is not fair to expect the fellowship of all the Churches and to join none.

The principal reason why I should be a member of some company of believers is because it is the Divine plan for me (except under rare circumstances where there may be no one with whom I can conscientiously join). When three thousand souls were converted at Pentecost, we read six significant things of them, in which they become a pattern to young converts in every generation.

1. They received the Word.
2. They were baptised.
3. They were "added unto them."
4. They continued steadfastly in the Apostle's teaching and fellowship.
5. And in the Breaking of Bread.
6. And in public prayer. (Acts 2. 41, 42).

If we want more proof, let us remember how Thomas missed meeting the Risen Lord by staying away from the company of the disciples. Christ's dearest wish for His own was "That they may all be *one*," "that there may be one flock, and one Shepherd." Finally, there is a plain and unmistakeable command in Hebrews 10. 25; "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is."

There are those who say that an immense number of Christians remain all their lives outside the Churches. We do not believe it. Doubtless there are a few, a very few, who are either mistaking the mind of the Lord as to their place amongst His people, or who are peculiarly unfortunate, either in their neighbours or in their health. Apart from these, there are many professors, but few Christians, if by a Christian we mean one who has chosen Christ to be his Saviour and Lord.

2. WHAT CHURCH SHOULD I JOIN? Many factors must enter into this deeply important decision. For obvious reasons, family ties count for something, and questions of distance count for a good deal. If scriptural methods are not compromised, it is better to join a Church that is spiritually alive than one spiritually dead. It is of great importance to enter into a fellowship where one will find

good opportunity for Christian work, whether in preaching, visiting, teaching a class, or helping in some quieter fashion. None of us can afford to shut ourselves out from the privilege of trying to win souls.

But not one of these considerations rises to the highest level of all. In the last resort, implicit obedience to the revealed Will of God will be the right path and the happy path. We cannot join a Church, when we have a choice, without giving a moral sanction to all its teachings. If we work in harmony with a man who is preaching doctrine that would lose men's souls rather than save them, we become partakers of his evil deeds (2 John 11), and therefore we cannot ally ourselves with some bodies of Christians, however attractive they may be in other respects. True, we shall never agree absolutely with anyone, but we ought not to identify ourselves with those who hold what the New Testament describes to be fundamental error. We shall see in the next section what that is.

The important practical question is this: in which of the Churches in my neighbourhood shall I find principles and practice most in accordance with what is "found written" in the divine plan for worship? Even though there be imperfections in carrying out the plan, the failure of man cannot alter what is written. However dull it may appear, the path of simple obedience will never lead to soul starvation nor to limitation of usefulness, but to the very best possible that our lives can attain.

3. What should be my attitude towards other professing Christians? This brings us to a third problem of fellowship. We have asked why should I join a Church, and which Church should I join; let us consider, finally, what ought to be my attitude to members of other Churches, and especially in the matters of uniting with them in Christian work, and of admitting them to meet us at the Lord's table. Let us put aside all judgment in advance, and see what the Bible says.

We very soon find that we ought not to extend our fellowship to everyone who pleases to call himself a Christian. It is becoming the custom in some Society functions now

to ask the guests to bring their invitation cards, because when great numbers are entertained the host and hostess find that perfect strangers are apt to come in, shake hands with the utmost assurance, and share in the good things provided! Interlopers like these, sometimes wilfully, but more often innocently, expect to share in the privileges of Christian fellowship when they have neither part nor lot in the matter. We are given certain tests in the New Testament to apply to all such, and if they are found to be intruders, we are to refuse them share in our worship, we are to avoid their help in Christian work, and in some cases withdraw ourselves from all friendship with them. Paradoxical as it may seem, there are cases where we may be friendly with unconverted people rather than with professed believers, if the latter are bringing disgrace upon their profession (1 Cor. 5. 9-13).

What are these tests as to fellowship?

1. *We must not have fellowship with professing Christians who are leading scandalous lives or who fall into open sin.* For instance, we are not to have company with the unchaste, with the covetous (we are surprised to see the *covetous* in such bad company), or idolaters, or revilers (which presumably means those who use abusive language), or drunkards, or extortioners (1 Cor. 5. 11). It would appear that contentious persons and those who stir up strife and divisions are to be included in this category (Romans 16. 17; Hebrews 12. 15).

2. *There must be no fellowship with any who teach a different Gospel.* "Though we," says Paul to the Galatians "or an angel from Heaven, should preach unto you any other Gospel . . . let him be anathema" (Gal. 1. 8, 9). For the sake of emphasis, he repeats, "If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema." Again, we hear the Apostle of Love saying, "If anyone cometh unto you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not unto your house, and give him no greeting, *for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil deeds.*" (2 John 10, 11).

What is the "Gospel," what is the "teaching," referred to here? The first means, surely, the divinely appointed

way of salvation by which our sins may be forgiven and conquered. The latter, as the context shows, means a right conception of the proper deity and humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the first two epistles of John are devoted to establishing.

3. *We must withdraw fellowship from those who refuse to acknowledge the authority of the Apostolic writings and teachings.* "If any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. 3. 14, 15). There is a similar thought in verse 6 of the same chapter.

There are a few like passages more vaguely expressed, such as Romans 16. 17; and Titus 3. 10.

It does not follow that everybody who falls under one of these condemnations is to be treated with cool contempt and instant excommunication. The heretic must have a first and a second warning (Titus 3. 10). Our Lord prescribed the proper course to be followed in Matthew 18. 15-17. The business of the shepherd is not to drive out sheep from the fold, but to seek them when they go astray. If a brother is overtaken in a fault, the duty is to restore such a one, if it be possible, in a spirit of meekness, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Nevertheless, we cannot read the solemn passages quoted above, and the letters to the Seven Churches, without seeing that we have a duty in refusing fellowship to the classes mentioned, and we must obey although it brings us into direct conflict with what the Germans call the Zeitgeist, the Spirit of the Age, whose cardinal virtue is toleration.

To sum up, there are some who may take upon themselves the name of Christian with whom we ought not to engage in Christian work, and who ought not to be allowed to join us at the Lord's table. Exactly how we are to interpret the passages as referring to present-day conditions may be a matter of opinion. The writer believes that those living in open sin, those who teach that salvation may be had by any other means than by faith in Christ

and His Vicarious Sacrifice, those who deny the proper deity or humanity of the Lord, and those who do not acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures, must undoubtedly be excluded from our fellowship, but without haste and without bitterness.

Let us turn to the other side of the subject. Obviously, very many Christians of all denominations, whom we have every reason to believe are genuinely the Lord's, would not and could not be shut out on these sound scriptural principles. How ought we to regard them? A perfect army of texts crowd to the mind exhorting us to embrace all such in loving fellowship, even if they are weak in the faith (Romans 14. 1), or do not "follow us," as John put it (Mark 9. 38). We need barely mention such important chapters on love and unity as John 17; 1 Cor. 13; Eph. 4. When Peter withdrew fellowship at Antioch on inadequate grounds, he "stood condemned." When Apollos came to Ephesus, he had not received Christian baptism, but Priscilla and Aquila "took him unto them" (same word as in Rom. 14. 1). They neither refused his fellowship on the one hand, nor neglected to lead him on into more light on the other. When he decided to go to Corinth, they gave him a letter of commendation.

If it is the Lord's Table that we gather around, all the Lord's children, except those whom He may have expressly put under discipline, have a right there. If we exclude any whom He has not plainly excluded, do we not make it *our* table instead of His? How ashamed should we be, if in our everlasting habitations we lived next door to those with whom we would have nothing to do on earth!

The spirit of narrow exclusivism was already at work in Apostolic times, and one Church, headed by Diotrephes, was so hedged about with orthodoxy that even the Apostle John was shut out! Not content with this, the leader put out of fellowship those of his own company who *did* receive brethren from the obnoxious assemblies. This was not Christian discipline but personal spite. Unfortunately, Diotrephes has had imitators, if not admirers, in more modern times.

We amongst Open Brethren (with some exceptions)

believe that we are following sound scriptural lines in refusing fellowship to those described above, but we rejoice to unite in Christian work with all who are truly converted, whose lives are upright and who hold the fundamentals of the faith. We love them and honour them, and although we may think that in some respects we have found, by grace, a more excellent way, yet we recognise to the praise of God that there are amongst them many holy and devoted souls, evangelists of power and earnestness, teachers and hymn writers to whom we and the world owe a deep debt. When they care to join us at the Lord's Table, they are most sincerely welcome.

Lest it be thought that this is merely the opinion of one individual of no standing, we quote the following editorial from a well-known periodical of unimpeachable authority and orthodoxy amongst us—"The Witness."

"The principle acted upon by so-called 'Open Brethren' is, and always has been, to receive only such as are known to be believers, and who are personally sound on the fundamental doctrines of the faith, and whose walk and conversation are such as becometh the Gospel. Be it 'market-place' or anywhere else,* such only are received, and none such are refused fellowship.

"Instances of failure in carrying out this simple principle may be found, but nevertheless the principle is held and generally carried out, because no other is to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

"A person excluded *on scriptural grounds* from one meeting has never, to our knowledge, been received at another; but alas! too often godly persons have been put away for reasons that were apart altogether from the teaching of 1 Cor. 5. 9-14; Gal. 5. 7-10. Some such have been put away because they went to a meeting not 'recognised' as 'in fellowship;' others because they went to preach the Gospel at a 'mission;' others because they took part in evangelistic work carried on by Christians outside the meetings, but whose testimony God was

*This is in response to a criticism, that some who were refused fellowship in one meeting were accepted elsewhere, so that the Lord's Table "might as well be set up in the market-place."

blessing; others because they had not seen that the immersion of believers was the only baptism found in Scripture, and on many other grounds equally without warrant in the Word of God. To receive such was no breach of godly order, but subjection to the Will of the Lord rather than to man. As well might the Apostle John and those with him, whom Diotrephes excluded, have been refused fellowship in deference to his high-handed, self-willed action."

We may quote, also, from the official schedule of our doctrines and practices issued by the Western Counties and South Wales Evangelization Trust, which puts under the head of Practices "the reception at the Lord's Table of all Believers known to be sound in faith and godly in life" (Rom. 15. 7; 1 Cor. 5. 6-8; 10. 14-17).

If this should fall into the hands of one who holds and walks in the main tenets of the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles, and who longs to be free from human traditions and to get back to the simple worship and fellowship "found written" in the New Testament, he will find a welcome amongst us in the company of those like-minded. He will find some human failure; he may not always hear eloquent or popular preaching, but we trust and believe that in most cases he will share in what is better, a spirit of loving family sympathy, the help of real *brethren*, uniting with him in worship and fellowship with the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER X.

History of Some Early Believers in Europe.

THROUGHOUT the darkest days of the apostasy of Christendom in the Middle Ages there were always believers, and even companies of such, who made it their aim to act in accordance with the Scriptures. As one of them said, preaching in the year 1404: "Since the Church of Christ was founded, His true followers have never diminished to such an extent as to leave the world without at least some countries where at least some of His saints were to be found."

Their histories have chiefly been written by their enemies, so that they are usually described as "heretics," and every kind of evil is attributed to them. Yet, though great efforts have been made to destroy their literature, sufficient remains to reward research in presenting a true picture of their practices and beliefs. Often the testimony of their persecutors bears unconscious testimony to their real character. An inquisitor of the Romish Church, writing about 1250, says that among all sects this is the most dangerous, "and this for three reasons: First, because they are of the greatest antiquity, for some say they go back to the time of Sylvester (about A.D. 315), others that they can be traced to the apostles themselves; further, because they are the most widely distributed, for there is scarcely any country in which this sect is not represented. Thirdly, because, while other sects repel by their gross blasphemies, this one possesses an appearance of great piety, presenting an upright life before the eyes of men, and believing all that is good of God and in doctrine; only they abominate the Church of Rome and her priesthood, which, alas! the mass of the laity are only too willing to agree with."

It was characteristic of these congregations to avoid sectarian names. They called themselves preferably just

"Christians" or "Brethren." Many names were given to them, and in course of time some of these, after much protest, came to be accepted by them.

The Bogourils, sometimes called Bulgari, so numerous in Bulgaria and Servia, and elsewhere, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, extirpated by the Roman Catholic power, must have owed much of their wide extension to a persistence of primitive faith in those lands where the apostle Paul and his fellow-labourers had founded churches.

They influenced the Albigenses in the south of France, who were in constant opposition to the dominant Church, and never ceased to protest against the corruption of her clergy. At a synod held by them near Toulouse, in 1167, it is stated that brethren were present from Languedoc, Bulgaria, and Italy. One of the best known of them, Peter de Bruys, denied infant baptism, showing that baptism was for believers only, taught that there was no value in consecrated buildings, but that every place might be a place of worship, and rejected transubstantiation and mass for the dead. War, persecution, massacre, were the weapons used to stamp out the Albigenses. In 1245 two hundred were burned in a single day.

Among many other names given to the so-called heretics and sects, that of the Waldenses has come to be widely known. Peter Waldo was a wealthy merchant of Lyons, who in 1170 sold his goods and went out to preach. The Waldenses maintained the sufficiency of Scripture for all times, and that men ought to appeal to that, and not to the Pope. They desired a definitely priestly order, and permitted laymen to administer the Lord's Supper. Persecution led them to take refuge in the valleys of the Alps towards the close of the twelfth century. In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII. issued a bull for their extermination. So late as 1655 French and Irish troops were sent, who devastated the Vaudois valleys, where the Waldenses still lived. It was then that Milton wrote of them :

> "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints whose bones
> Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
> Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
> When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones."

One of the greatest names in these histories is that of John Wycliffe (1320 to 1384). He taught that all "dominion" is from God, that it is not vested in any one man, as was claimed for the Pope, but that each individual has access to God, can appeal direct to Him without priestly or other intervention, and is responsible to Him. Wycliffe's strenuous life's work was crowned by his translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English language. Not only was "Lollardism" in England profoundly influenced by him, but his teaching was largely instrumental in causing the Hussite movement in Bohemia, a movement of such dimensions that for some two centuries Bohemia, though surrounded by Catholic powers, was a Hussite country. The "compacts" became the law of the land, viz., liberty for the free and orderly preaching of the Word of God; the sacrament in both kinds to be given to all the faithful in Christ who were not precluded by mortal sin; the secular power and wealth of the clergy to be withdrawn, and they brought back to the evangelical rule and apostolic life, such as that which Christ and His apostles led; all mortal sins and public disorders to be punished by the proper authorities, whatever the rank of the offender. In the little town of Tabor, in Bohemia, may still be seen the large pool of water, called Jordan, where great numbers of persons were baptised on the confession of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and in the middle of the town are the remains of stone tables in the market place, put up for those who gathered to remember the Lord's death in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine, in such large numbers that no building could contain them. At the battle of Weissenberg, in 1620, the Roman Catholic power was re-established in Bohemia, and by the use of terrible cruelty the Bohemian Brethren and others who dissented from Romish doctrine were destroyed or driven out of the country. Taking refuge in Saxony, the Bohemian Brethren (Moravians) developed a wonderful missionary zeal and activity, all the more remarkable that it was at a time when this important function of the Church of Christ was but little considered. Their devotion led them to choose the most difficult and painful fields of labour as being on this very account

preferable. Later their influence on John Wesley was a means of much blessing for England.

There are many records of these different " sects," from which it is evident that in the times before the Reformation they were very numerous and wide-spread, and that they had constant communication with one another. A few instances will illustrate this, and also their character and faith.

In the twelfth century there was a large assembly in Metz who had translations of the Bible in use.

In 1150 the inquisition notes the number of these heretics in Cologne, and that in reliance on Mark 16. 16 they baptised adults. Many were executed, and the judge himself said of them : " They met death, not with patience alone, but with enthusiasm."

In 1192, in Spain, the King of Aragon, issuing an edict against them, states that he acts thus in accordance with the example of his predecessors.

About 1240 they were numerous in Austria, where a duke and many persons of high position favoured them. In 1260, in the diocese of Passan, their assemblies were over forty in number.

A priest writes in 1260 : " In Lombardy, Provence, and elsewhere the heretics have more schools than the theologians and larger congregations; they hold solemn meetings in the market places and in the open fields."

They are mentioned as being in the Pyrenees, in Naples, and Sicily, on the coasts of Kent, where the Archbishop of Canterbury took measures against them ; in Holland and the north of France. Indeed there seems to have been on country without some of them.

In Strassburg, in 1212, five hundred persons were proved to belong to these assemblies. Those arrested said that their fellow-believers were numerous in Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Bohemia, and elsewhere. Eighty of these taken in Strassburg were burned, including twelve priests and twenty-three women.

From the twelfth to the sixteenth century was a period of great activity in building in Europe. Many of the finest cathedrals and town halls were built during that

time. Among the many powerful trade guilds that existed then, one of the most influential was the masons' guild. This maintained privileges for its members which even the Roman Catholic Church could not ignore. In days when persecution was so severe that the possession of a Bible involved its owner in grave danger, the Scriptures were read in the builders' huts around the great cathedrals and other buildings that were in course of erection. Many desiring to hear the Word of God, yet having no connection with building, became honorary members of the guild, and so attended these frequent readings. Thus in the darkest days provision was made for keeping alive a knowledge of the Word.

The Reformation, so intimately connected with the name of Luther (1483-1546), wrought a mighty change in the conditions of Europe. Whole nations and countries were liberated from the bondage of Rome. The wider spread of the Scriptures revived the knowledge of justification by faith and other half-forgotten truths. The assemblies of pre-Reformation days were naturally joined in intimate association with the reformers. As, however, the Reformation developed this fellowship was checked. Luther, whose personal sympathies were with the old evangelical assemblies, soon found himself in a position of extraordinary influence in political matters. He describes himself as being like an ironfounder, standing with the molten metal which God had put it into his power to pour into either one of two moulds. On the one hand were the old assemblies, spiritual in character ; on the other the Protestant princes, who believed that the only safeguard against the power of Rome was in the political power of the state, allied with a Reformed Church. Luther chose the latter alternative, which led to the organisation of the Lutheran Church. This now led to acute differences between him and the old assemblies, whose position thus became exceedingly difficult, as they were persecuted both by the Roman Catholic and the Protestant authorities.

Their practice of baptising believers was made a great point of attack. They were often called by their enemies, "Anabaptists," *i.e.*, those who baptised again. This

name has come to bear a bad meaning because the persecutors willingly confused the believers with certain sects of evil principles and morals which arose at that time. Because some of these estranged sects practised baptism, the dominant churches included them and the evangelical assemblies under one name, although there was no connection between the two.

A law was passed in 1529 by all the states of the German Empire making it penal for any person to be baptised or to baptise another. Death by fire, sword, or other means was the penalty. Those who neglected to bring their children to be sprinkled by the priest or Protestant pastor were also subjected to terrible penalties. Landgrave Philip of Hessen was the only prince who had the courage to refuse to accept the edict. Luther approved of it. Thousands of innocent men, women, and children were cruelly put to death, or tortured and imprisoned. Nothing was too much for the pitiless persecutors to do nor for the heroic sufferers to endure. In a book written against the "Anabaptists," in 1533, the author says: "Age and sex are not considered, and where the men are killed the women and children perish in misery and hunger. They are kept in horrible, endless imprisonment, and pine away in dirt and privations. Towards these people we show no friendship, no kindness, we acknowledge no duties, and so will all be treated who are guilty of this worst and most persistent of errors."

Such persecution scattered and disorganised the assemblies, and it was largely through the labours of Simon Menno (died 1559) that they began to be gathered again. He made it his life's work to find out and visit and reorganise these dispersed communities. Though still desirous of avoiding sectarian names, yet in later days many of these congregations came to be called Mennonites, after Menno. A special interest attaches to those who, for conscience' sake, emigrated from Prussia to Russia. Their first settlement in South Russia was made in 1789, where also many "Pietists" from Wurttemberg established themselves, and were an important factor in the beginning of the "Stundist" movement among the Russians. The

Mennonites in Russia obtained special privileges from the Russian Government. These brought with them certain dangers, for, in their natural desire that their children should have the political privileges which Church members enjoyed, the Mennonites made it a practice to baptise all the young people when they reached a certain age. They still retained adult baptism, but the children became Church members automatically. This led to rapid declensions of spiritual life. There came, however, revival, largely through the preaching of a pastor of a branch of the Lutheran Church named Wuest. He never came to share the convictions of the Mennonites in Church or assembly matters, but large numbers were converted through his preaching. Many of these were concerned to find themselves in a position contrary to the Word of God through being associated in Christian fellowship with a large number of unbelievers or unconverted persons. After no little conflict on this subject some began to come out from the Mennonite Church, and in 1860 assemblies of Mennonite Brethren began to be formed on the ground of a common life in Christ. At first the old Mennonites persecuted these Brethren, and the sons of men who had been driven out of their fatherland by persecution became persecutors in their turn, and they are now widely spread over the vast extent of the Russian Empire.

E. HAMER BROADBENT.

[Among many sources from which the above information has been drawn, we are especially indebted to *Die Reformation and die aelteren Reformparteien* by Dr. Ludwig Keller, and to *Geschichte der Alt-Evangelischen Mennoniten Brüderschaft in Russland* by P. M. Friesen.]

CHAPTER XI.

(Appendix II.)

Evangelization Trust Schedule.

THE SCHEDULE

HEREINBEFORE REFERRED TO IN CONNECTION WITH

"THE WESTERN COUNTIES AND SOUTH WALES EVANGELIZATION TRUST."

HAVING regard to the exhortation contained in the Word of God that Christians should "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," references to certain Scriptures are appended under appropriate headings, and the Doctrines and Practices taught by these Scriptures amongst many other Scriptures are to be avowedly approved by all persons allowed by the Trustees to use any portion of the Trust property. The Trustees express their adherence to this statement of Doctrines and Practices as calculated to meet some of the current departures from the Faith, and also express their assurance that should other errors arise or be revived they may likewise be met from the Word of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Divine Inspiration, Authority and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.

2 Tim. 3. 15-17; 1 Peter 1. 10-12; 2 Peter 1. 20, 21; Psalm 19. 7-11.

2. The Unity of the Godhead, with the distinction of Persons in that Unity, namely, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to whom equal honour is due.

Deut. 6. 4; Gen. 1. 2-26; John 1. 1, 2; 5. 17, 22, 23; 14. 25, 26; 16. 7, 27, 28; Phil. 2. 6; Heb. 1. 1-3, 8.

3. (*a*) That the Son of God truly became man, being begotten of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary.

John 1. 14 ; Rom. 8. 3 ; Gal. 4. 4 ; Matt. 1. 20-25 ; Luke 1. 35.

(*b*) That His death was a sacrifice to God and a propitiation for the remission of sins.

Rom. 4. 25 ; 2 Cor. 5. 21 ; Heb. 9. 24-28 ; 10. 12-14.

(*c*) That He was raised from the dead.

Matt. 28. 5-7 ; 1 Cor. 15. 20.

(*d*) That He ascended to the right hand of God, and is now the all-sufficient High Priest of His people.

Mark 16. 19, 20 ; Luke 24. 50, 51 ; Acts 1. 9 ; Eph. 4. 8-10 ; Heb. 4. 14-16 ; 7. 25.

(*e*) That He will come again to receive His people unto Himself, and to set up His Kingdom.

John 14. 3 ; 1 Thess. 4. 13-18 ; Luke 1. 32, 33 ; Isa. 9. 6, 7 ; Dan. 2. 44, 45 ; 7. 13, 14.

4. That in consequence of the fall of Adam, man became "lost," and at "enmity against God ;" that he is also "without strength" to do the will of God.

Psalm 53. 2, 3 ; Luke 19. 10 ; Rom. 3. 19 ; 5. 6, 12-19 ; 8. 5-7.

5. The need of the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration and sanctification.

John 3. 5-8 ; 16. 8-11 ; Titus 3. 4-7 ; 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14 ; 1 Peter 1. 2.

6. (*a*) That the justification of the sinner before God is by faith alone.

Rom. 3. 21-26 ; 4. 4, 5 ; 5. 1 ; Gal. 2. 16.

(*b*) That every justified one is also born of God.

John 1. 12, 13 ; James 1. 18 ; 1 Peter 1. 23.

(*c*) That such new birth results in and is made evident by holiness of life and good works.

Eph. 2. 10 ; 4. 24 ; Titus 3. 4-8.

7. (*a*) That at death the spirit of man does not cease to exist, or become unconscious.

Eccles. 12. 7 ; Luke 16. 19-31 ; 23. 43 ; 2 Cor. 5. 6-8.

(*b*) That the dead will be raised either to life or to condemnation ; and that the blessedness of the righteous and the punishment of the unrighteous will be alike eternal.

1 Cor. 15. 51-57 ; Phil. 3. 20, 21 ; Rom. 14. 9, 10 ; 2 Cor. 5. 10 ; Dan. 12. 2 ; Acts 17. 31 ; Rev. 22. 11-15.

PRACTICES.

8. The customary observance of the ordinance of Believers' Baptism by immersion on personal confession of faith, and the commemoration of the Lord's death in the Breaking of Bread on the first day of the week, in so far as circumstances allow.

Matt. 28. 18-20 ; Acts 2. 41, 42 ; 8. 36, 38 ; 10. 47, 48 ; Luke. 22. 19, 20 ; Acts 20. 7 ; 1 Cor. 11. 23-26.

9. The reception at the Lord's Table of all Believers known to be sound in faith and godly in life.

Rom. 15. 7 ; 1 Cor. 5. 6-8 ; 10. 14-17.

10. The conducting of the meetings for worship under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with opportunity for the exercise in the assembly of all true gifts for edification, subject to the Lordship of Christ.

Rom. 12. 6-8 ; 1 Cor. 12. 13. and 14. ; 1 Peter 4. 10, 11.

"Now

UNTO HIM

that is able to keep you from falling,

and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory

with exceeding joy, to the only wise

GOD OUR SAVIOUR,

be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both

NOW AND EVER.

AMEN."

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